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Parental Involvement in Manitoba Elementary Schools

By

Cynthia Shirley Lina Minter

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

in

Educational Administration

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1995

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Dr. D. M. Richards

.....
Dr. R. Hayden

Date: June 9, 1995

In memory of

my mother

Alice Alma Minter

1922 - 1990

Abstract

This research explored the nature of actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools in Manitoba, as perceived by parents, teachers and administrators. A review of the literature suggests that during the last decade or more there has been a renewed emphasis on involving parents in the education of their children. At the present time, Manitoba Education has made parent involvement a priority for school reform. The literature also indicated that students, parents and teachers benefit from increased parental involvement. Over the last decade or two much has been written about parental involvement but there has been little documentation as to how parents are involved or the activities in which the stakeholders prefer parents to be involved.

A questionnaire was developed and was sent to 29 principals, 87 parents of elementary children and 87 elementary school teachers in rural and northern Manitoba after pilot testing. Sixty-three percent of parents, fifty eight percent of teachers and eighty-three percent of administrators responded to the survey.

Using a five point Likert-type scale, the participants rated the actual and preferred parental involvement for 25 items. The five categories of parent involvement represented by the items were: parent as supporters and recipients, parents as home tutors, parent involvement in instructional tasks in the school, parents involved with non instructional tasks in the school, and parents as decision makers. Responses were analyzed using descriptive analysis and the quadrant assessment model.

Parents, teachers and administrators perceived actual involvement of parents as low in most categories. The exceptions were parent involvement in attending

school events, attending parent teacher conferences, and helping with field trips. Parents indicated more involvement than teachers or administrators. All groups indicated a preference for increased involvement in all categories.

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Chapter One
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The importance of the family and the school to student development and success in learning has been recognized and is largely taken for granted. The current interest in school reform has renewed the emphasis on parental involvement in education.

Traditionally the relationship between school and parents has been friendly but distant. The school has used newsletters, open houses and parent teacher conferences to inform parents of school programs and their child's progress. Describing the traditional parent-school relationship, Rowell (1981) states "that the school will tell the parents what it wants them to know and that the school will answer questions if the parent takes the initiative to ask" (p. 441). Today few schools would reflect this limited view of parental involvement. There is greater access to information about school programs, policies and personnel. Parents share in more decisions that affect the education of their children.

Though teachers have a variety of opinions about the role of parents in education, they recognize the influence of the family on students. In describing teachers as *intrigued* by the family Lightfoot (1978) states "whether teachers viewed the child's parents in collaborative or competitive terms, they viewed them as central to the child's development and often critical to the child's successful career in school" (p. 8).

The research on parental involvement has shown that it is beneficial (Henderson, 1987). Parental involvement in instructional tasks leads to school improvement and increased student achievement (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1988; Ziegler, 1987). In her study of teacher practices of parent involvement, Epstein (1986) concluded that parents had a more positive view of teachers who actively involved them in learning activities at home. Increased collaboration between teachers and parents benefits both students and schools. Are parents welcome and encouraged to become involved in their children's education? Is

parent involvement being utilized for the betterment of the school? The answers will become increasingly important as education dollars become more scarce. Parents as satisfied customers are an important public relations resource.

In many school jurisdictions parent advisory councils (PACs) have become the forum for parent-school communication. PACs have offered some opportunity for involvement and created expectations that there would be consultation with parents regarding the operations and policies at the local school level. In some cases, councils are involved in activities such as fund raising and not in the decision making process. In most cases the school administration can choose the issues and areas for parental involvement. Often their participation is little more than token involvement. Greenberg (1989) commenting on the effectiveness of the PTA states that "while at higher levels the PTA is currently quite an effective organization, which takes on the complex educational issues of our time, at the building level, few PTAs are encouraged or permitted to cooperatively run the school" (p. 67).

In ***Renewing Education: New Directions - A Blueprint for Action*** (July, 1994) Clayton Manness, the Minister of Education has included parental and community involvement as one area of six priorities for school reform. Clearly there is an acknowledgement that action is needed if parents and the community are "to have a more significant role as educational partners and to create ways for all parents to be involved in their children's school and schooling" (Manitoba Education, 1994, p. 27). Along with a companion document, ***Renewing Education: New Directions - Guidelines: Advisory Councils for School Leadership,*** guidelines for the establishment of councils, the membership and responsibilities have been outlined. As the membership of the proposed councils does not include teachers it is difficult to believe that this structure will meet the need of increased collaboration.

The research in school effectiveness has led to new models of school management. Parental involvement is included in models such as Caldwell and Spinks'

Collaborative School Management Cycle (Murphy, 1991) that has been successfully implemented in some Australian schools. Compensatory education programs often include parental involvement as one component. The Head Start program started in 1965 is one example of a comprehensive program which involves parents in a number of roles including management and governance (Berger, 1991). Comer (1986), working with associates from the Yale Child Study Centre on school improvement projects, argues that strategies making parents visible within the school lead to "a spiral of ever improving performance by students teachers and parents" (Flaxman & Inger, 1991, p. 4). The Comer process involves parents on school management teams which set objectives and plan strategy about school climate, academics and staff development. Models which support effective parent involvement are available for consideration in planning school programs.

Though the effective school movement supports the increased involvement of parents in the education of their children, studies of effective schools show differences in the parental involvement strategies implemented. Chavkin and Williams (1987) found discrepancies between the views of parents and senior administrators as to the extent that parents should be involved in schools. Epstein (1986) found that the majority of parent involvement programs involved only a small number of parents. For example, Epstein reports that less than four percent of parents were involved on a frequent basis with 80 percent reporting no in-school involvement. In contrast to teachers who were not active users of parent assistance, teachers who actively involved parents in assisting their children at home reported these efforts to be successful regardless of the educational and socio-economic status (Epstein, 1982).

Research supports the value of parental involvement, but there has been little assessment of the perceived needs and expectations of parents and professionals, both teachers and administrators. Teachers and administrators perceive schools as open and

accessible to parents (Cullingford, 1985). Do parents share this perception? Parent participation is frequently discussed within schools. Are parents currently participating in activities that are valued by teachers and parents? Do schools invite parents to be involved in a wide range of activities?

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of parental involvement in elementary schools as perceived by parents, teachers and administrators. In the course of the study the following specific problems were investigated.

Problem 1

What are the opinions of parents regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

1.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by parents?

Problem 2

What are the opinions of teachers regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

2.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by teachers?

Problem 3

What are the opinions of administrators regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

3.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred

involvement of parents as perceived by administrators?

Problem 4

What differences are there between the opinions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

Definition of Terms

Parent: Adult caregiver having one or more children attending elementary school. For this study, within the household, the members were free to choose who would fill out the questionnaire.

Parental Involvement: Involvement of an adult caregiver with the schooling of his or her child. For this research, involvement covered parental roles ranging from passive interest to active involvement in classroom and school activities. School involvement may be instructional, non-instructional or both.

Instructional Involvement: Parents are directly involved with the learning of the child.

Non-Instructional Involvement: Parent assistance at the school level with activities such as fund raising, clerical tasks, field trip supervision, etc.

Administrators: Principals and vice principals of elementary schools

Rationale for the Study

In the education of children there has been a shift in emphasis from school centred to a stronger home-school partnership. The research on the effects of parental involvement in the education of their children support this change in emphasis. The one consistent message of the research on parental involvement is that "the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement" (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 227). Historically, the family has been responsible for the early education and training of their children. Upon reaching school age, children's education became the responsibility of the school. Teachers expected and were expected to educate the child with little or no interference from the parents. Neither the early training of parents nor their involvement at the school were valued as contributions to their children's education. Today many educators would view parent involvement as not only valuable but also essential (Kelly, 1973).

One reason for the change in attitude is the expanded view of learning. "The shift has been from the idea of learning based on purely cerebral qualities to the idea of learning as a complex matter which involves emotion and attitudes as well as ability" (Cullingford, 1985, p. 13). The most basic education of the child occurs in the home. Before the child enters school basic values and attitudes have already been learned. Parents have a central role in the education of their child as these values and attitudes cannot be easily changed without the support of the parents.

Parents and teachers share a common commitment to the needs of the child. Parents want the best possible educational opportunities for their child. Teachers have a professional commitment to offer the individual child the best learning opportunities to meet the child's needs. Ensuring the child's best interests are met

forms the basis of a partnership built on trust and respect for each partner's role (Fantini & Cardinas, 1980; Kelly, 1973).

At present parental involvement varies from school to school and parent to parent. In some schools parents are involved in a wide range of instructional and non-instructional activities. Other schools offer few opportunities or may even discourage parental involvement. In some families parents are very involved in their child's schooling, while others seldom interact with the school.

To be effective parental involvement opportunities should match the needs of parents and the school. In setting the priorities for schools, Manitoba Education has targeted increased opportunities for parental involvement including the development of school advisory councils. As a result of this study, differences in the perceptions of parental involvement by parents, teachers and administrators will be documented. This information is important as it provides a better understanding of the needs and desires of both parents and teachers. In order to utilize the potential of parents, parental involvement opportunities must be aligned with the preferences of both parents and teachers.

Assumptions

This research was carried out based on the following assumptions:

1. Parents want and have a right to be involved in the education of their children and to be involved in some capacity within the school.

2. Administrators and teachers are supportive of parental involvement and are aware of the involvement of parents in their school.

3. There is some level of parental involvement in elementary schools which is considered to be productive.

4. All respondents would understand the questionnaire and would interpret

the items in a similar manner.

5. Survey items covered the major areas in which parents are involved in elementary schools.

Delimitations

Data for this study were collected from the parents, teachers and administrators selected from elementary schools within rural and northern Manitoba. Therefore, generalizations to other communities must be made with care.

Limitations

1. Data collection relied on the use of a questionnaire that did not allow for further exploration of some responses. Content analysis of comments added by some participants allowed for limited confirmation.

2. The study was limited in the extent to which respondents were knowledgeable and willing to give truthful answers, and that their opinions represented parents, teachers and administrators of elementary schools in rural and northern Manitoba.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has introduced the purpose of the study. The research problem has been defined as the actual and preferred parent involvement as perceived by parents, teachers and administrators in selected rural and northern elementary schools in Manitoba. The study was designed to explore the preferences of each group regarding parent participation in the education of their children.

Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature and research.

The research design and methodology are presented in Chapter 3.

Data analysis and interpretation and the major findings of the study are the focus of Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, the implications of the research, suggestions for further research, and the conclusions drawn.

Chapter Two
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with an historical overview of parental involvement in the education of children. The areas discussed include: the rationale for parental involvement, research findings on the value of parental involvement for students, parents and teachers, and models of parental involvement.

Historical Overview

Parent involvement has always been a part of our educational tradition. Historically, parents and family groups have been responsible for the education and socialization of their children. In primitive cultures parents and communities modelled the social, moral and intellectual behaviours that were necessary for survival and participation within their group.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers such as Locke (1632-1704) and Rousseau (1712-1778) recognized the importance of the parent as educator. Locke introduced the concept of the mind as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, at birth emphasizing the need for parents and educators to provide the optimal environment for the child's mental development (Berger, 1991). Pestalozzi's teaching and writing incorporated Rousseau's concern that children be allowed freedom to grow. In *The Education of Man* Pestalozzi recognizing the significance of parents wrote

> For children the teachings of their parents will always be the core, and as for the school master, we give thanks to God if he is able to put a decent shell around the core. (as cited in Berger, 1991, p. 41)

Froebel (1782-1852) viewed mothers as instrumental in the "natural unfolding of the child". He is most noted for his kindergarten curriculum that emphasized the needs of the child and not the adult prescription to teach reading, writing and morality (Berger, 1991).

The emergence of the modern parent educator and the role of the parent in learning situations can be traced to these early social thinkers.

Throughout the latter 1800s and early 1900s the emphasis on parental influence in child development continued, and an interest in child study and child rearing practices developed. During the early 1900s there was a change in the thinking of some child development experts who stated that child rearing was not instinctive and that "there existed better ways of rearing children than those prescribed by tradition" (Brim, 1959, p. 18). This assumption led to the publication of a variety of articles and books offering information about child development and rearing. Popular magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies Home Journal* reflected this interest in child rearing and the importance of a good home environment (Stendlar, 1950). A number of books such as Gruenberg's *Outlines of Child Study* (1927), Holt's *The Care and Feeding of Children (1894)* (cited in Brim, 1965) and Watson's *Psychological Care of Infant and Child (1928)* (cited in Berger, 1991) provided information and influenced the child rearing practices of parents. New ideas and theories arose advising parents about the correct way to discipline children. The many publications often provided parents with contradictory advice that may have contributed to frustration and feelings of inadequacy in child rearing.

In 1897, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was organized in the United States as a parent body within the school system. The PTA was active in political issues such as child labour laws and health and welfare issues. A strong emphasis on cooperation between parents and schools developed. Membership in the PTA reached 1.5 million by 1930. The rapid growth indicates a great amount of interest in parent education (Berger, 1991). Through the efforts of the PTA parent involvement was becoming institutionalized within schools.

The development and expansion of parent education programs led to the formation of the National Council of Parent Education in 1925. The Council attempted to coordinate parent education programs across the US. During the 1920s financial support for child development studies and parent education training programs was supplied by public and private funds. With financial support from private foundations such as the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and the

Spelman Funds, colleges and universities established programs emphasizing child development research, training of professionals, and providing information and education to parents. In Canada, similar programs were started at the University of Toronto and McGill University (Berger, 1991). The National Council disbanded in 1938 when funds were no longer available.

The PTA continued to grow reaching a membership of 9 million during the 1950s. Continued emphasis on parent education was reported by the National Education survey which stated 32% of adult education classes were on family life (Brim, 1965). The writings of Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (1950), Piaget *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (translated in 1952) and Spock *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946) were curriculum sources for parent education (Berger, 1991). Parent education programs promoted the physical, emotional and intellectual development of the child.

Though there was an emphasis on parent education and the development of the whole child, formal education was almost entirely the responsibility of the school. The philosophy of the parent-school relationship could be described in these words "send your child to school, we will do the teaching; your responsibility as a parent is to be supportive of the teachers and schools" (Berger, 1991, p. 67). The message was clear. Education was best left to the professionals. Intrusions from outsiders including parents were unwelcome. Topping (1986) describing the decline in the role of parents stated, "in a way, then, the development of formalized education in schools served largely to rob parents of a function they had carried out for millenia" (p. 1).

This arm's length relationship between school and parents was a contrast to the close community-school relationship that existed in our early history. With a mostly rural population, the governance of many early public school was firmly in the hands of town councils and community committees. The community members had often built the school themselves. It was common for parents to provide lodging for the teachers. They voted on the funds available for the school's operation. "Close community supervision of the nineteenth-century classroom had

many disadvantages, but it did mean that school and community were on the same wavelength" (Stamp, 1975, p. 2).

In 1973 the Canadian Education Association's survey of public opinion identified lack of parent interest as the major problem facing schools (Stamp, 1975). Such a finding could indicate a widespread belief that *teachers know best* or that parents lack knowledge about how schools operate and how they can be actively involved. That parents lack an interest in their own children's education seems unlikely. With the delegation of education to professionals, the home-school relationship has been defined by schools. The seeming lack of interest in their education may be an indication of frustration with the opportunities available for involvement. In her discussion of lack of parental involvement, Greenberg (1989) states "a common response to extreme, continuing frustration is apathy. Many middle-class parents don't come to meetings at school, or otherwise become involved, because they aren't allowed to do anything they feel is really important" (p. 66). In such situations the parent-teacher partnership is a farce for parents have no say in decisions affecting their child's education.

In the last three decades there has been a shift towards increased parental involvement. Cullingford (1985) aptly states that "parents have been rediscovered - sometimes it feels as if they had to be re-invented - by educationists" (p. 1). There are a number of reasons for the reassessment of the role of parents in education. First, there has been the development of a body of research indicating that parental involvement has a positive affect on learning and child development (Henderson, 1987; Gordon, 1979; Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991; Rich, 1987; Swap, 1993). The studies discussed support the idea that parents can make a difference in academic achievement, attitudes to learning and social development. Second, there are indications that parents want to be more involved with decision making. Goodlad (1983) found that parents prefer to have decision making authority move to the individual school level where their concerns might be more easily heard and answered. The desire of parents to influence the policies and practices of schools is reported by Stamp (1975) and Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991). A 1973 CEA

survey indicated that parents want the right to influence their local schools through school advisory councils (Stamp, 1975). Wang and Lawton (1994) using information obtained from surveys of parents by Robinson (1994) and the Ontario Parent Council, agree that parents want to be better informed and want increased participation in decision making. The desire of parents to be more involved and the recognition that those affected should have the right to participate in the decision making increases the possible roles that parents have within the school. Contrary to a common fear, parents want to be informed and be meaningfully involved not control the school (Goodlad, 1984; Gleadow, 1991). Third, educators and parents may not share a common belief about what constitutes a good education (Stamp, 1975; Wang & Lawton, 1994). As schools have become involved with innovation after innovation parents have been left behind. Parents may desire a more traditional approach while educators favour the latest innovations. Active involvement of parents in classrooms and schools informs them about the benefits the new methodologies and innovations have for their children. Providing accurate and first hand information provides a measure of accountability for the practices and policies of the school. Fourth, there are practical reasons for involving parents. Increasingly there is a need for support for schools as the education system competes with other public institutions for scarce resources. Parents themselves are a valuable resource providing expertise, additional adult assistance to students, and providing links to community resources.

In 1994 Clayton Manness, the then Minister of Education in Manitoba, presented a document titled *Renewing Education: New Directions*. One strand of the action plan focusses on parental and community involvement. The document states that "actions are required to enable parents to have a more significant role as educational partners and to create ways for all parents to become involved in their children's schools and schooling" (p. 27). The plan calls for the establishment of advisory councils as requested by parents, requires schools to include advisory councils in developing school plans and divisional/school budgets, increases parental choice of school within the system and states the fundamental expectations

and rights of parents relating to their children. The document and the proposed legislation to support it will provide a legal basis for an expanded role of parents/community within the school.

Summary

Parents have the fundamental responsibility for the education of their children. The role of parents in formal education has shifted over time from sole provider to shared responsibility with schools to a supporter of schools. In the last few decades the right of parents to be actively involved in their children's education has gained renewed recognition.

Value of Parent Involvement

Parents can be involved in a many ways within schools. Each form of involvement has its own function and benefits.

Considerable research indicates that parental involvement in instructional activities effects both learning and child development in a positive way (Henderson, 1987; Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1988; Seeley, 1989; Lightfoot, 1978). The benefits to students include higher achievement (Johnson, 1986; Epstein, 1982, 1988; Gordon, 1979; Moles, 1982), better school attendance, decreased delinquency, fewer discipline problems and reduced drop out rates (Comer, 1986).

Parents' attitudes and behaviour influences their children's learning. In 1967 the Plowden Report emphasized the importance of parent encouragement and interest in student achievement. The report stated "more variation in children's school achievement could be accounted for by variation in parents' attitudes than by either variations in material circumstances of home or by variations in schools" (Kellaghan et al, 1993, p. 47). Parental attitude and interest gains importance to children's achievement as they grow older (Kellaghan, 1993). Henderson (1988) supports the belief that the benefits are not limited to early years students. The types of parental involvement encouraged vary with the age of the students.

Having parents actively involved in the school affects students' attitudes as

well as achievement. Grade five students in classes where parent involvement was encouraged reported more positive attitudes toward school, more regular homework habits and more familiarity between the home and school (Epstein, 1982).

Due to work responsibilities, being single parents and childcare responsibilitites, few parents are actually free to volunteer during school hours. Teachers and administrators who wish to increase the involvement of parents will have to consider more viable options.

Parent involvement in home learning activities also has benefits for student achievement (Henderson, 1987; Shuttleworth, 1986; Wahlberg, 1984). Home learning activities are viewed by teachers as a preferred way to involve parents. Most parents do help their children with tasks assigned by teachers and regularly assist them with learning activities (Epstein, 1986). Regardless of educational background, parents are willing to help their children when requested by teachers. As not all parents have the same skills or abilities it is necessary for parent education to be part of a successful home learning activity program. Home factors such as verbal interaction between parents and children, the level of language and thought used, availability of reading materials, modelling of reading behaviour by parents and educational expectations for children influence academic growth (Swap, 1987). Parent education can be used to encourage and support parents to increase their use of effective practises. For example, Olmstead and Rubin's assessment of the Parent Education Follow Through program found that parents involved in the program used more desirable teaching behaviours than parents who were not involved (Swap, 1993). Nebgen (1979) supports the relationship between parent learning and effective home tutoring. Other benefits of parent education he reports include increased student motivation, higher parent self-esteem and higher educational expectations for their children. Contrary to the belief of some teachers, parents indicated a willingness to spend time learning how to carry out the home learning program (Moles, 1982).

Children whose parents help them at home and maintain contact with the school have higher achievement than children of similar aptitude and family

background whose parents are less involved. Parental interest in education continues to be significant through secondary school. A survey of high school students revealed that those students obtaining higher grades indicated a higher degree of parental involvement (Rich, 1987). Bloom's (1985) study of young achievers (aged 17-35) showed that "in nearly every case these young people had parents who believed in the work ethic and who themselves. . . enjoyed a variety of activities that opened up fields of interests for their children" (Kahn, 1987, p. 10). There are usually more opportunities for parent involvement during the early years than the middle and senior years of formal schooling. The evidence suggests that the role of home tutor/supporter and home learning activities deserves more consideration at every level. It also suggests that school policies and teacher practices are critical factors to parents' continued involvement in children's education (Epstein, 1986, 1988; Laureau & Benson, 1984).

Other advantages to having parents involved in instructional activities have been noted. When parents are interested in their child's schooling the behaviour and attitudes of teachers are affected. Johnson (1986) mentioned such interest causes teachers to strive to improve instruction which enhances the school program. When parents express support and appreciation teachers report feeling more positive about teaching and their school (Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). For teachers who believe in a collaborative home-school relationship, the presence of volunteers in the school encourages them to use more home learning activities (Epstein, 1986). These teachers also rated parents higher in regard to follow through on activities and helpfulness. Though the number of parent volunteers available may be small, their presence is a clear indication to teachers that parents are interested in their children's education. It is difficult for teachers to say parents don't care when parents are regularly in the school. In describing the significance parental presence has on schools, Davies (1991) says "the tone and content of school conversations about parents and communities change when parents are physically in the building" (p. 378). Harter (1986) also reported a similar change in attitudes when community members were involved with school

improvement projects.

Parents themselves gain from involvement in their child's education. An increase of knowledge about the school, its programs and policies is an expected outcome. When teachers actively involve parents in home learning activities the parents report that they know more about their child's school program than in the previous year and that they received more ideas to use at home (Epstein, 1986). Other outcomes are less predictable. Parents' attitudes about themselves, teachers and the school are affected by involvement. Parents who are frequently involved in home learning activities feel they should help their child and are capable of doing so. When teachers' practices reflect family-school cooperation, parents rate them as better teachers (Epstein, 1986). From a parent's perspective, a cooperative relationship between the school and family is valued.

Johnson (1986) believes that parental involvement maintains a sense of pride in the school and that parents send a positive message to the community about the school. Harter (1986) supports this position and encourages increased community participation because "the only way for the public to see who we are and what we do is to invite them to our schools and give them a role to play" (p. 118).

Many of the benefits for adults and students are related to increased understanding between parents and professionals which leads to a collaborative relationship. Collaboration implies that parents are true partners in education and have a role in decisions that effect their child's education.

The parent-teacher partnership facilitates a better understanding of the needs and abilities of the child which in turn can lead to more consistency and continuity in goals for the child. For example, the research in the special education field suggests effectiveness is increased when parents and teachers share in the goal setting and program development for the child (Kelly, 1974). In working with the school personnel parents can be advocates for their child's needs. Teachers gain a better understanding of the parents' concerns and hopes for their child. When parents and teachers share in the decision making they gain a better understanding

of the role each has in helping the child to achieve the goals and can maximize the potential for the child.

The effects of strong collaborative teacher-parent relationships go beyond individual students and classrooms to benefit schools.

The effective schools literature includes parental involvement and support as one factor which makes a difference in school achievement. Emonds, one of the founders of the effective schools movement, arguing that parents are critical to school improvement wrote,

> I believe that the evidence supports me in arguing that schools are responsible for pupil acquisition of minimum competency in basic school skills regardless of the level of parent participation. . . . I also believe that without parent participation, schools cannot move to that excellence that is our ultimate objective in so vital a matter as public education. (cited in Henderson, 1988, pp. 152-153)

The work of Comer and colleagues in New Haven supports the need for parental involvement in sustaining school improvement programs (Flaxman & Inger, 1991). Effective schools have parents who understand, support and have a role in accomplishing the mission of the school (Fauthier, 1982; Pearson, 1990).
To gain parent support, the school must be aware of parents' opinions about what they see as being important in the school. If the school holds a set of values and beliefs similar to the parents/community, support for the school will be strengthened. The need for support implies that the school will solicit and respond to parents' opinions and expectations. Attention to parent opinion about school improvement does not guarantee that parents are actively involved in determining the vision, mission and goals of the school. The inclusion of parents in determining the mission for the school identifies parents as true partners with the school. "A true partnership suggests an acceptance of equal skills and experience, and a sense that each partner brings something different but of equal value to the relationship" (Pugh, 1988, p. 178). The partners share in promoting the best interests of the learners. In this situation decision making becomes more democratic with those affected by the decisions involved in making the decisions. The continued interactions have a spiral effect as parents and teachers learn what

core values about education and the purpose of schools each holds. Glickman (1993) believes "for school renewal to endure, every school and district in our land needs principles that transcend the interests of any individual and that are derived from the constituents" (p. 23). In his opinion these core values form the basis of a *covenant* which "is a living embodiment of why we as a school community do what we do" (p. 24). Sergiovanni (1991) describes such beliefs as forming an *educational platform* which "provides the common cement bonding people together as they work on behalf of the school" (p. 150).

Summary

Research indicates that parental involvement has positive effects on students, teachers, parents and schools. Involvement in a wide range of in-school and home learning activities support higher levels of achievement for individual students and for schools. Parental interest in schooling and expectations for their children affect student achievement, attitudes and behaviour. When parents are involved in their children's schooling, teachers and parents have more understanding and positive opinions of each other. Involved parents have increased knowledge of the school, its programs and its aims and are able to support these in the community. Research indicates that collaborative parent-school relationships are needed to sustain school improvement programs.

The Scope of Parental Involvement

Studies of parental involvement show that parental involvement in education is beneficial. Ira Gordon, studying the Follow Through program concluded that "all forms of parent involvement help but that the more comprehensive the involvement - that is, the more roles parents can play in a school and the longer this involvement lasts, the more effective it will be" (Rich, 1987, p. 10).

The roles that parents play and the type of activities in which parents are involved have been documented. A number of models and typologies for parental involvement are found in the literature.

Some researchers have described the activities of the parental involvement program as being on a continuum. Cervone and O'Leary (1982) see "parental involvement as falling along a continuum that stretches from activities in which the parent is the passive recipient of information to activities in which the parent is an active partner in the educational process" (p. 48). Four categories of involvement: reporting progress, special events, parent education and parent teaching are included (see Appendix A). Within each category parents may have a passive or a more active role. As a postscript Cervone and O'Leary propose that a fifth column, parents as educational decision makers, could be added to the continuum. Rathbone and Graham devised a three stage process model (Figure 1). The stages, peripheral involvement, collaboration and partnership, have equal value.

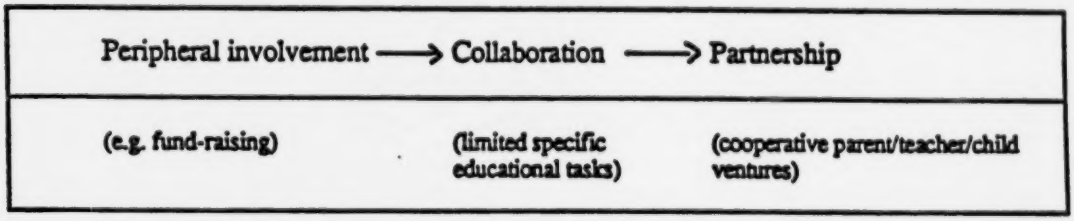

Figure 1. Rathbone and Graham's Parent Involvement Model (1981, p.146).

In the peripheral involvement stage parents are recipients and supporters helping fund raise, attending special events and promoting the activities of the school. In the second stage, collaboration, parents participate in educational tasks such as listening to students read and monitoring students practising a previously taught skill. Partnership, the third stage, involves parents in activities in cooperation with the teacher such as tutoring and promoting different cultures.

In these models parents can choose the level of involvement in which they feel comfortable. Cervone and O'Leary believe their continuum is a tool for schools to assess the current level of parental involvement and plan for increased involvement. Linear models of involvement appear to be hierarchical implying some forms of involvement are more important than others.

A few parent programs focus on one area of involvement. Programs focussing specifically on parent education and training belong in this group. Research evidence supports the participation of parents as tutors for their children. The Home and School Institute has developed a strategy *Home Learning Recipes* which "are specific, practical, no-cost activities for learning at home . . . [which] build family interaction and children's academic achievement without duplicating the school" (Rich, Mattox & Van Dien, 1979, p. 509). In a number of programs such as project HELP in Benton, Michigan and AHEAD in Los Angeles, students whose families participated made gains in academic achievement (p. 509-510). The low cost in time and money for educators and parents make such programs attractive. Improving parenting skills and the parent-child relationship are the aims of parent education programs such as PET (Parent Effectiveness Training) and STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting). In both programs communication skills, interpersonal relations and how to cope with inappropriate behaviour are topics of discussion and study (Swap, 1993). These programs presented by trained personnel offer parents several group sessions to gain insight into their parenting practices. In their research, Dornbusch and associates (1987) found that parenting style had an effect on the school success of children supporting the idea that parent awareness of their practices is important. These programs are based on the belief that improving a child's home circumstances increases the readiness and ability for the child to learn.

Few parental involvement programs limit involvement to one area. Home learning activities and education for parenting skills may be part of a broader program. Gordon (1979) does not see parent involvement as hierarchical but rather as a wheel with six spokes (Figure 2). Each spoke is equivalent in that each is necessary for the wheel to turn. The six categories are: classroom volunteer, adult learner, decision maker, adult educator, paraprofessional and teach your own child. An individual parent may participate in one or more categories but Gordon feels some parents need to be involved in all categories for parent programs to be effective.

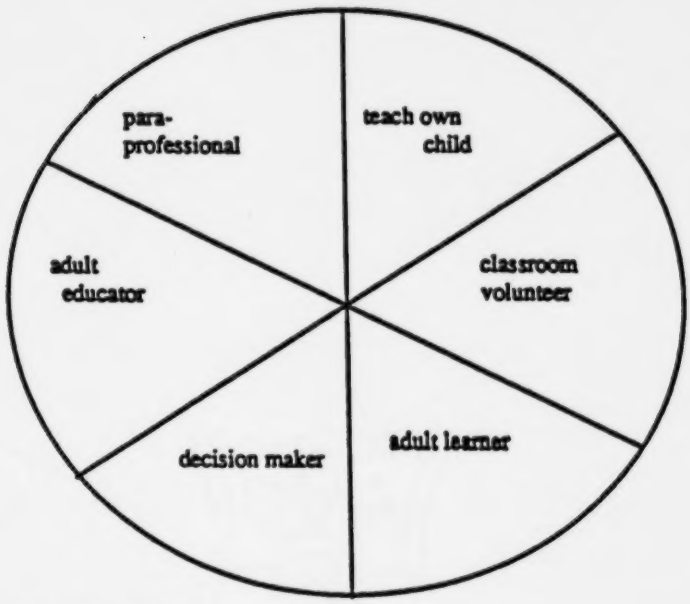

Figure 2: (Gordon, 1979)

The variety of roles offers parents opportunities that fit their abilities and comfort levels.

Head Start which began in 1965 is an example of one of the earlier comprehensive parent involvement programs. Head Start is a federally funded compensatory program that is intended to give disadvantaged preschoolers a better start in school. Berger (1991) describes the Head Start program as a wheel with spokes radiating from the centre. The spokes include an educational program, dental and health care, resources from the community, nutritional food for children and career information. Figure 3 shows some possible activities. In 1985 the National Head Start Parent Involvement Task Force was created to assess and strengthen the parent involvement component of the program. Parent need assessments are completed at the beginning and throughout the program to determine a program that can meet the needs of parents, children and the teachers.

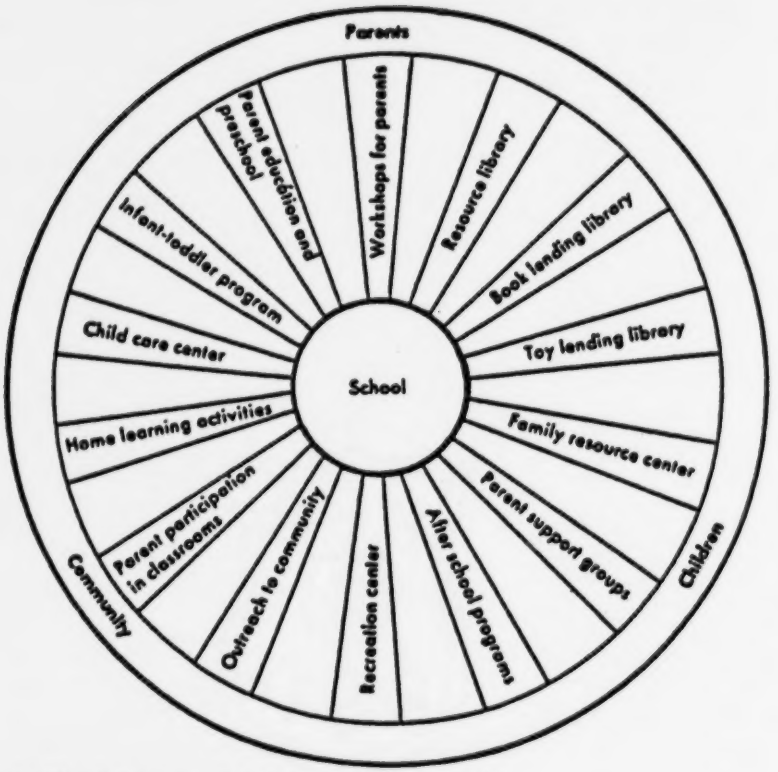

Figure 3: Head Start model (Berger, 1991, p.236).

Head Start offers parents education, opportunities to help at school and at home, and the opportunity to be involved in decision making. Each program centre has a Head Start Centre Committee composed of parents whose children are enrolled. The Policy Committee membership must be 50 percent parents of children enrolled. Assessments of Head Start programs find parents are satisfied with their children's accomplishments and the opportunities involvement has given them (Berger, 1991).

From research and the literature available Epstein (1988) concludes that there are five types of parental involvement: parental obligations, the school's obligations, parental involvement at school, home learning activities, and involvement in governance and advocacy which

> form a comprehensive program with three overriding goals:
> - the improvement of school programs, classroom management, and teacher effectiveness,
> - the improvement of student learning and development,
> - the improvement of parents' awareness of their continuing responsibilities and

> contributions to their children's education and social and personal development across the school years. (p.59)

The major types of parental involvement and a brief description of each follows.

Type 1 The *basic obligations of parents* are to ensure the health and safety of their children, to teach family life skills and to provide home conditions that support school learning.

Type 2 The *basic obligations of the school* are to communicate with parents about school programs and their children's progress using a variety of means. The intent is to improve their understanding of the programs and their children's achievement.

Type 3 *Parent involvement at school* includes volunteering in classrooms and other areas of the school, attending performances and sports events, and attending parent education workshops or programs.

Type 4 *Parent involvement in home learning activities* includes activities initiated by the parents, children's requests for help and teacher requests. The activities are coordinated with the children's classwork.

Type 5 *Parent involvement in governance and advocacy* gives parents a role in the decision making processes. Such involvement may occur through the PTA, school advisory councils or other special interest groups that are able to influence the policies and practices of the school.

In Epstein's opinion there is limited parental involvement. In any school only a few parents are actively involved in a variety of roles. As each type of involvement has a different function and effect, schools need to assess the goals they have for parental involvement and tailor activities to meet these goals. Epstein (1989) developed a table of goals and possible activities for each type of parental involvement which has been included in Appendix B.

The roles identified by Epstein are similar to the five basic roles of parents mentioned and described by Henderson (1986) and associates which are: partners, collaborators and problem solvers, audience, supporters and co-decision makers.

As partners, parents are expected to fulfill their obligations to provide for the health and safety of their child, ensure school attendance and provide the necessary

supplies. The role of collaborators and problem solvers extends the school obligations to communicate with the parent. School personnel are expected to consult with parents regarding student progress and behaviour. The parent is expected to show an interest in their child's school experiences, provide support and help school personnel find appropriate solutions when problems arise with their child's learning or behaviour. As an audience the parents are expected to attend the special events of the school and show their appreciation for the school's and their children's performances. In the role of supporters and co-decision makers, the parents become more actively involved in school activities. Parents can be supporters by volunteering in a variety of ways such as tutoring, assisting in the library, sharing a hobby or interest and performing clerical tasks. As co-decision makers parent have a voice in making policy decisions. Involvement may be membership on school advisory councils, joint parent-school committees to review discipline policies, input into budget decisions, and planning parent involvement programs. To fit this category there needs to be evidence that the parents' advice actually influences the decisions made by school and district staff.

The literature suggests that there are a number of roles and a wide range of activities in which parents are or may be involved. There has been little research regarding the preferences that parents, teachers and school administrators have regarding the ways parents are involved in schools.

Epstein and Becker's (1982) survey of elementary teachers and principals in Maryland found that most teacher-parent contact was limited to traditional activities such as conferences, open houses, notes sent home, classroom volunteers and audience for school events. Principals in these schools reported that they supported the traditional parent-teacher communication and were strongly in favour of parents being classroom volunteers. Langenbrunner and Thornburg's (1980) earlier study support this opinion. Most reported having active PTAs and advisory councils associated with programs where such a council was legislated. Half the principals reported that more than 20 parents were actively involved. In a follow-up study Epstein (1986) reports that only "4% of the respondents...were very active, spending more than 25 days in the school" (p. 281). Families have changed. An increase in the number of families with

two working parents or single parents means it is necessary to recognize "that traditional activities which in the past brought parents into the school during the day -- plays, parties, field trips--no longer fit the lifestyle of many parents today" (Kahn, 1987, p. 10). When planning parent involvement opportunities educators need to be sensitive to the needs of the parents in their community.

The involvement of parents in home learning activities that support school programs was valued by parents and school personnel (Epstein, 1986; Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Moles, 1987).

Williams and Chavkin (1985 as cited in Chavkin, 1993) surveyed educators, teachers, principals and teachers, and parents to gain insight into their perceptions of the role of parents. Educators "indicated the most support for involving parents in traditional educational roles and substantially less support for the roles that call for shared decision making in education" (Chavkin & Williams, 1987, p. 180). Parents as well "supported the roles of 'audience' at school meetings, home tutor and school program supporter....Parents were very interested in the roles of advocate and decision maker" (Moles, 1987, p. 139). Chavkin and Williams (1993) found that socioeconomic status did not affect parents' desire to be involved in a variety of roles in their children's school. Parents felt they were able to participate in decisions relating to their children's education and behaviour and other areas such as teacher evaluation, curriculum, and school governance. Shields (1994) research on parental involvement in policy change found that parents of secondary students in enrichment programs were unaware of school policies related to the program. Parent responses indicated that they felt their suggestions were not heard.

Both parents and school personnel have a strong interest in parental involvement in schools. There seem to be differences in the scope of activities and roles preferred by parents and educators. Schools that wish to develop an effective parental involvement program will need to consider the needs and preferences of both parents and educators. The evidence indicates that effective parental involvement must include a range of opportunities from the traditional activities of audience, school supporter and home tutor to the less traditional role of shared decision maker.

In planning for an effective relationship with parents, Everett-Turner (1986) advises educators that

> Before we can work as effective partners, we need to understand something important about families, parents and teachers. Each one is unique, with individual strengths and weaknesses. If we persist in holding a narrow view of parent involvement for all people, we're doomed to failure. (p. 19)

Summary

Though different aspects of parent involvement are stressed, the models presented all assume that parental involvement is important. A range of activities in which parents may be engaged is included in some of the models. Parents and educators support the traditional roles of parents - supporter and audience, home tutor, classroom volunteer - though few parents are available during school hours. Parents are more supportive than educators of parent involvement in non traditional areas such as participating in decision making and governance. A wide range of opportunities for involvement is needed to meet the needs of parents and teachers.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to assess parental involvement in elementary schools as perceived by parents, teachers and principals. For this study a general model similar to Gordon's (1979) was used. The idea of differential involvement which is a characteristic of Cervone and O'Leary's (1982) and Rathbone and Graham's (1981) models was considered when developing the items for the questionnaire.

Five categories were included in the data collection. These are (1) parents as recipients and supporters, (2) parents as volunteers in non-instructional tasks, (3) parents as volunteers in instructional tasks, (4) parents involved with home learning and (5) parents involved with advisory and decision making tasks. Parents as recipients and supporters includes returning completed forms, attending conferences about children's progress, or attending special events such as concerts, science fairs, and open houses. Parent input is controlled by the opportunities presented by the school. As volunteers parents can be involved with non-instructional and instructional

tasks. Examples of non instructional tasks include clerical assistance and making instructional materials. Instructional assistance would include helping students practise a skill, listening to students read, supervising small group activities and sharing an area of expertise with students. Each task, whether instructional or not, supports the teachers allowing for increased teaching time. Home learning activities may be instigated at the request of the teacher or at the parents' discretion. The survey items in the questionnaire refer only to activities expected by the school. The fifth category, parent involvement in school decision making includes participating in advisory committees and having input in setting school priorities.

A variety of documents published by Manitoba Education (1994) support parental involvement in schools. In *Parents and Schools: Partners in Education* schools are encouraged to involve parents in a variety of activities and offer opportunities at every level for involvement. Involvement in school advisory councils has been stressed (Manitoba Education, 1994b, 1994c). The emphasis on the a variety of roles made it appropriate to include traditional and nontraditional roles in the assessment of parental involvement.

There has been general acceptance that parental involvement in valuable. However, parents, teachers and principals may have different perceptions as to which areas of involvement and activities are important.

Chapter Three
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and the methodology used are the focus of this chapter. In the first section the research design is outlined. The development of an instrument used in the data collection is the focus of the second section. The methodology used in conducting the study, data analysis and the use of the Quadrant Assessment Model (Sanders, 1980; Sisimayi, 1994) are included in the third section.

Research Design

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of parents, teachers and principals regarding the involvement of parents in elementary schools. Babbie (1992) suggests that "much of social research is conducted to explore a topic, to provide a beginning familiarity with the topic" (p. 72). Information was gathered about current parent involvement and the types of involvement preferred by each group. The areas of parental involvement to include were derived from the literature. The activities used as questionnaire items to describe each type of involvement were found in the literature and by canvassing teachers for ideas based on their experiences.

The descriptive research methodology was used. Descriptive studies are concerned with describing what is within a particular time frame and population (de Vaus, 1990). Mouly (1974) observed that "descriptive studies...are oriented towards the description of the present status of a given phenomena" (p. 238).

A questionnaire was seen as an appropriate format to survey the opinions of teachers, parents and administrators for this study. As data was being collected from Manitoba, it was practical and efficient to have surveys which were returned by mail. Mouly (1974) suggests that the anonymity of the questionnaire "may because of its impersonality, elicit more candid and objective replies" (p. 243).

The uniformity of questions ensured that the answers could be compared more easily.

Close ended items were used in the questionnaires. Borg and Gall (1989) report that the limited research completed suggests that open and closed questions provide similar information. A five point Likert-type scale was used for recording responses. In Mouly's (1974) opinion, Likert-type scales have merit when using close ended questions as they offer flexibility in response. Respondents were asked to rate each item twice, first indicating actual involvement and second preferred involvement. Respondents were asked to add any comments and observations that they wished.

Respondents

The respondents chosen for this study were administrators, teachers and parents associated with elementary schools in rural and northern Manitoba. Surveys were sent to principals of 30 schools in 14 school districts for distribution. For each school, one administrator, three parents and three teachers were asked to be participants. At the time of the survey the parents were involved in some activity in the school. For each school, the teachers surveyed taught in different levels, grades K-2, 3-4 and 5-6.

Development and Administration of the Instrument

A general questionnaire was developed which was used to generate specific questionnaires for administrators, teachers and parents (see Appendix B). All questionnaires were similar with wording changes to reflect the group being surveyed. The survey had two main sections, demographical data and data related to activities in which parents might be involved.

Respondents were asked to add comments and observations about parental involvement that they wished to share.

Demographic Data

The information collected was specific to the group being surveyed. Parents were asked if they were employed outside the home, their relationship to the child, and the number of children in the family. Teachers were asked to report their current assignment, years of teaching experience, gender and their current use of in class parent helpers. Administrators reported their current position, gender and years of administrative experience.

Information related to Parental Involvement

This section asked participants to rate the actual and preferred involvement of parents in a number of activities. Each participant circled their perception of the actual involvement and the preferred involvement for each item. A five point Likert-type scale was used with 1 meaning never and 5 meaning always.

For example:	Actual	Preferred
1. Help children with homework	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

The questions were the same on the three questionnaires. Some words were changed to relate to the group being surveyed. For example, parents were asked questions in relation to their own children.

The questionnaire was developed in stages. The literature was reviewed for models of parental involvement. Using a model similar to Gordon's (1979) wheel model as a guide, five categories were included. From the literature lists of activities were made for each category: parents as recipients and supporters, parents as volunteers in non-instructional tasks, parents as volunteers in instructional tasks, parents as home educators and parents as decision makers (Epstein, 1982, 1986; Cervone & O'Leary, 1986; Berger, 1991; Gordon, 1979; Swap,1987). Teachers were canvassed for additional items which were added to the lists. Items on the final list were randomly ordered. Eichelberger (1989) suggests the pilot study is useful as a method of increasing validity.

Pilot Study

After the development of the draft questionnaire, a pilot study was completed. The pilot study was undertaken to determine the appropriateness of the questionnaire. Validity and reliability are important criteria for assessing a questionnaire. Validity refers to the degree that the survey measures what it says it measures. Reliability refers to the consistency of the results.

The issue of validity was addressed in two ways. The questionnaire items were gathered from the literature and practitioners' experience as representing the areas of parent involvement included in the study. Second, a pilot study was undertaken.

The draft questionnaires were sent to four parents, four teachers and four elementary principals in a Manitoba school district which was not included in the study. The questionnaire with a covering letter requesting their voluntary participation and explaining the purpose of the pilot study was hand delivered to each respondent. Postage paid return envelopes were included for ease of return.

All participants in the pilot study returned their surveys. The feedback received was useful in suggesting a few revisions for the final questionnaire. The respondents indicated they felt the items described the types of parental involvement being investigated and were appropriate. Respondents reported that the items were easily understood. One item was rewritten in more specific terms. The draft item, "share an area of expertise with students e.g. craft, culture, story telling", was changed to read "visit the classroom to share an area of expertise". No additional items were suggested for inclusion. Appropriateness, clarity and coverage of the types of involvement are all issues of validity.

All parents and some educators added comments about their experiences with parental involvement. The final draft included a request for participants to add comments and observations about parental involvement that they wished to share.

The suggested revisions were minimal and essentially format related.

Data Collection Procedures

Approval to proceed with data collection was received from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Review Committee. Information from Manitoba Education was used to identify school districts that had larger elementary schools (K-6 population of 200 students). Letters were sent to the Superintendents (see Appendix C) of the districts explaining the nature of the research project and asking permission to include the district in the research. Written permission was received from the Superintendents of fourteen rural and northern school districts to include a total of thirty schools in the survey. In early February an introductory letter (see Appendix C) and surveys were sent to the principal of each school explaining the nature of the research, that participation was voluntary and the assistance needed in data collection. In consideration of ethical concerns, participants were assured that no individual, school or school district would be identified in the study. In this regard the data collected were confidential and would be used only for the purpose of the study.

For each participating school, questionnaires were distributed by the principal to one administrator, three teachers (one from each level K-2, 3-4 and 5-6) and three parents currently involved in school activities. A covering letter attached to each survey clearly explained that participation was voluntary and what was required from each participant. Confidentiality and anonymity of individuals, schools and school districts was assured. The participants were asked to return the survey in the envelope provided to ensure anonymity. The participants were also advised that a summary of the results of the research would be made available to the school district offices upon completion of the study.

Follow-up letters (see Appendix C) for all participants were sent to all participating school principals in early March thanking those who had returned the survey and asking those who had not to please consider doing so.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, and percentage and the discrepancy analysis of the responses using the Quadrant Assessment Model were used to describe the data collected. In interpreting the data collected, the assumption was made that the scale used was at least an interval scale.

Quadrant Assessment Model

The Quadrant Assessment Model (Figure 4) was used to identify the parental involvement activities preferred by teachers, parents and administrators.

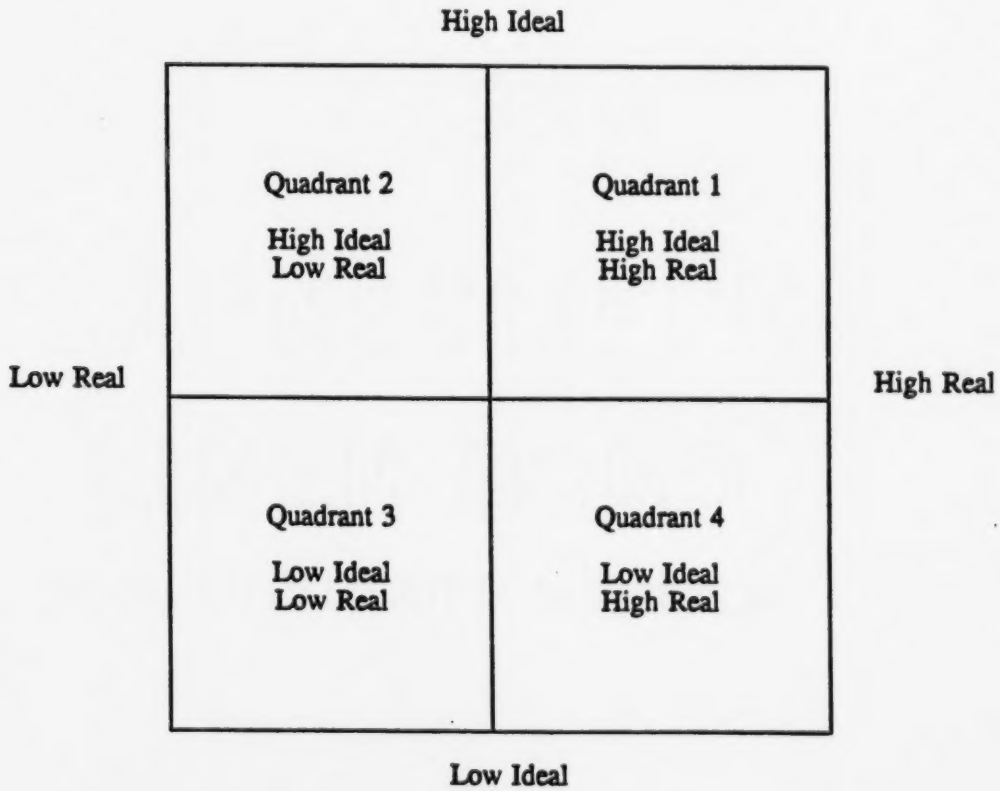

Figure 4. Quadrant assessment model (Sanders, 1980, p.14).

Information from the completed questionnaires was transferred to computer disk so two profiles of data, one for perceptions of actual involvement and the second indicating preferred involvement, could be generated for each subgroup of the sample.

The parents, teachers and administrators rated each statement twice using a five point Likert-type scale. The first rating indicated the perception of actual parent involvement in the task described. In the second, the participants rated the degree of involvement preferred for each task. In rating the statements, the participants provided both a measure of the real or actual involvement of parents and the preferred or ideal level of involvement for each task (Sanders, 1980).

After rating the following procedures were followed:

1. The data for each subgroup were processed separately generating three sets of profiles.

2. For each profile a tally of responses was made for each item to indicate the number of responses for each score on the five point Likert-type scale, including non responses.

3. The score for each task statement was calculated by finding the mean score of ratings of all respondents in each subgroup.

4. The scores of each task statement were used to calculate the mean score and standard deviation for each of the two profiles of actual and preferred parental involvement.

The mean score for the profile was used as the cut-off point to determine the High-Low values for each profile.

5. The discrepancies between the "ideal" and "real" assessments were used to assign the task statements to the four quadrants shown in Figure 4.

Interpretation of information for each quadrant is:

Quadrant 1. High Ideal - High Real

The statements indicate the activities which the respondents regarded as important and in which parents have high involvement. Such activities would normally be maintained.

Quadrant 2. High Ideal - Low Real

The statements reflect activities that are considered important and in which parents currently have little or unsatisfactory involvement. These activities indicate the areas that need to be considered in planning for increased or more satisfactory involvement.

Quadrant 3. Low Ideal - Low Real

Activities described by statements in this quadrant are considered relatively unimportant. These items receive little emphasis.

Quadrant 4. Low Ideal - High Real

Statements reflect activities that have high actual involvement but are not considered important to the respondents. These statements should be considered as they have implications for future plans. It may be worth considering decreasing these activities in favour of activities preferred by the respondents.

Summary

In this chapter the study design was outlined and the method was described. The descriptive method was considered appropriate to gather information on the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools.

Data were collected through a questionnaire. A description of the development and administration of the questionnaire, pilot test and the used of the quadrant assessment model for data analysis were included.

Chapter Four

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding actual and preferred parental involvement in northern and rural Manitoba elementary schools. Data for the research were collected through the use of a questionnaire.

The response rate, the characteristics of the respondents, and the major findings of the study are the purposes of this chapter. A summary focusing on the major findings concludes the chapter.

Response Rate

As shown in Table 1, the rate of response varied between the groups with the overall response rate being 63.5 percent.

Table 1

Response Rates of Participants

	Expected Response	Actual Response	Percentage Response
Parents	87	55	63.2
Teachers	87	50	57.5
Administrators	29	24	82.8
Total	203	129	63.4

Characteristics of the Respondents

In Part 1 of the questionnaire, personal data were collected for each of the respondent groups.

Parent Respondents: A total of fifty-five parents responded to the survey. Two

surveys were not useable. Of this number, 94 percent were mothers. Most of the respondents, 62 percent, work outside the home. Of the parents reporting no paid employment, three (5 percent) made note that they regularly did volunteer work within the community. One reported that she worked for a few weeks each summer. The majority of the respondents, 77 percent, had no preschool children. Table 2 summarizes the information provided by parents.

Table 2

Characteristics of Parents

			f	%
Work outside the home	Full-time		10	18.9
	Part-time		23	43.4
	Not at all		20	37.7
	Total		53	100.0
Relationship to child	Father		3	5.7
	Mother		50	94.3
	Total		53	100.0
Number of children	In school	1 child	16	30.2
		2 children	25	47.2
		3 children	11	20.7
		4 children	1	1.9
	Total		53	100.0
	Pre-school	None	41	77.3
		1 child	9	17.0
		2 children	3	5.7
	Total		53	100.0

Teacher respondents: All grade levels, kindergarten to grade 6, are represented by the teachers responding to the survey. 80 percent of the respondents are female.

The respondents have an average of 16.7 years teaching experience. Parent assistance is common to most of the classrooms. Table 3 summarizes the demographic information obtained from teachers.

Table 3

Characteristics of teachers

		f	%
Grade Level taught	Kindergarten	5	10.0
	Grade 1	9	18.0
	Grade 2	4	8.0
	Grade 3	6	12.0
	Grade 4	10	20.0
	Grade 5	7	14.0
	Grade 6	9	18.0
	Total	50	100.0
Teaching experience	1 - 5 years	6	12.2
	6 - 10 years	5	10.2
	11 - 15 years	9	18.4
	16 - 20 years	13	26.5
	21 - 25 years	14	28.6
	25 + years	2	4.1
	No answer	1	Missing
	Total	50	100.0
Gender	Male	10	20.0
	Female	40	80.0
	Total	50	100.0
Current use of Parent Help	Yes	35	71.4
	No	14	28.6
	No answer	1	Missing
	Total	50	100.0

Administrator Respondents: Twenty-four administrators, representing 83 percent of the possible respondents returned the survey. The majority are men. The average years of administrative experience are 14.9. Table 4 summarizes the data collected.

Table 4

Characteristics of Administrators

		f	%
Current Position	Principal	21	91.3
	Vice-principal	2	8.7
	Not given	1	Missing
	Total	24	100.0
Gender	Male	18	78.3
	Female	5	21.7
	Not given	1	Missing
	Total	24	100.0
Administrative Experience	1 - 5 years	3	13.1
	6 - 10 years	5	21.7
	11 - 15 years	7	30.4
	16 - 20 years	2	8.7
	21 - 25 years	4	17.4
	25 + years	2	8.7
	Not given	1	Missing
	Total	24	100.0

Actual and Preferred Parental Involvement

The second part of the questionnaire focussed on the actual and preferred involvement of parents in a variety of tasks as perceived by parents, teachers and administrators.

This section presents an analysis of the perceptions of each group of stakeholders. The purpose is to highlight the differences among the groups perceptions of actual and preferred levels of parental involvement.

The data collected were analyzed and interpreted using the questions raised in Chapter 1. First, the findings about the extent of the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by each stakeholder group (parents, teachers and administrators) are presented. Tables 9, 10 and 11 (see Appendix D) summarize the data reporting frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations for each item of the questionnaire. Second, the quadrant assessment model (QAM) was used to identify the parental involvement activities preferred by each group. Third, the items were ranked following standard procedures of discrepancy analysis. Using means for each item, differences were calculated by subtracting the real or actual score from the ideal or preferred score. Items were ranked for each subgroup according to the differences found.

Parents' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Parental Involvement

Question 1

What are the opinions of parents regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

1.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by parents?

Table 9 (see Appendix D) summarizes the response of parents regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools. For each task statement rated, the mean scores for preferred involvement are higher than the mean scores for the actual involvement. The range of mean scores for actual involvement (1.59 to 4.66) is greater than range of mean scores for preferred involvement (2.19 to 4.94). For all task statements except attendance at public activities and reviewing school work brought home by children, the differences were found to be significant.

A closer examination of Table 9 shows there are differences between the actual involvement of parents and their preferred involvement. The frequency distribution indicates parents rate their involvement in two categories, (1) parents as recipients and supporters and (2) parents involved with home learning, higher

than their involvement in the other categories, (3) parents as volunteers in instructional activities, (4) parents as volunteers in non instructional activities, and (5) parents as decision makers. Table 5 reports the ranked listing of the ten tasks in which parents reported the most involvement. An analysis of the distribution of the tasks shows four are included in two categories, parents as recipients and supporters (7, 5, 18, and 8) and parents involved with home learning (25, 2, 24 and 1). The remaining tasks are included in parents as volunteers in instruction (9) and parents as decision makers (6).

Table 5

Parents' ranking of actual parental involvement

Rank	Item No.	Task Statement	
1	7.	Attending public activities e.g. concerts and sports events	(3)*
2	5.	Attending parent-teacher conferences	(2)
3	25.	Reviewing school work brought home by my child	(1)
4	18.	Responding to newsletters and notices sent home by the school, e.g., returning information and materials	(3)
5	2.	Helping children with activities as requested by the teacher, e.g., reading, practising facts, etc.	(4)
6	24.	Participating in home reading programs	(3)
7	8.	Assisting with fund raising	(7)
8	1.	Helping children with homework	---
9	9.	Assisting with field trips	(6)
10	6.	Attending school advisory meeting such as parent councils	---

* Rank for preferred parental involvement

Parents' highest ratings for preferred involvement included eight of the tasks rated

highest for actual involvement. Parents felt they were more involved in providing support to the school, receiving information from the school and in participating home learning activities than as volunteers or decision makers. Few parents reported having no involvement as supporters and recipients and in home learning activities.

The differences between the actual involvement and the preferred involvement reported by parents are greater in the areas of parents as volunteers and in decision making. For example, helping to prepare instructional materials, 22 respondents (41.5 %) indicate no or little involvement. Only 11 respondents (20.8 %) indicated a great deal of involvement. Compared with parents' preferred involvement, 11 respondents (21.6%) wanted a moderate amount of involvement while 16 respondents (31.4%) wanted a great deal of involvement. Only 5 persons (9.8%) preferred no involvement while 4 (7.8 %) wanted little involvement. In the areas of parents as volunteers instructional and non-instructional and parents as decision makers, many parents reported little or no involvement. For most of the items, parents preferred moderate to a great deal of involvement. For two items, assisting with clerical tasks and supervising the playground, lunchroom and buses, more parents (34% and 39.6%) preferred little or no involvement than on any other task. Overall the level of actual involvement reported by parents was moderate.

The quadrant assessment model was used to examine the extent to which parents differed in their perceptions of their actual involvement as opposed to their preferred involvement. In QAM analysis, items are placed within a quadrant on the basis of overall mean scores. Statements having high actual and high ideal scores are placed in Quadrant 1. Quadrant 2 has statements with high preferred and low actual scores. Quadrant 3 indicates low preferred - low actual scores, while Quadrant 4 indicates low preferred high actual scores. For each profile, the task statements were assigned a high or low rating depending on whether they were higher or lower than the mean of the mean scores. In using this model the assumption is made that it is meaningful to rate items as high or low depending

whether their value is higher or lower than the mean. For example, the mean for the teachers' actual involvement must be over 2.433 to be considered high, while the mean for teachers' preferred involvement must be above 3.900 to be considered high. According to Sanders (1980), placement within the matrix is relative, not absolute.

When interpreting the results of the QAM it is important to keep in mind the first major point made above; with no exceptions, parents perceived that their actual involvement was less than the involvement they would prefer.

The results of the quadrant assessment matrix for parents' perceptions of actual and preferred involvement are presented in Figure 5.

Quadrant 1. The items located in quadrant 1 represent items from two areas, parents as supporters and recipients of information and parents as home tutors. The following task statements were assigned to this quadrant:

HT1 Help children with homework

HT2 Help children with activities as requested by the teacher, e.g. reading practise facts

HT17 Do extra activities suggested by the teacher, e.g. visit the library and museums, discuss current affairs with your child

HT24 Participate in home reading programs

SR5 Attend parent-teacher conferences

SR7 Attend public activities, i.e. concerts

SR8 Assist with fund raising

SR18 Respond to newsletters and notices sent by the school, e.g. return information and materials

DM6 Attend parent advisory meetings such as parent councils

ISI9 Assist with field trips

The items suggest parents have some degree of satisfaction with the information provided by the school and their involvement in the supporting school programs and home learning activities.

Quadrant 2. The one item located in quadrant 2, participate in school

Quadrant 2	Quadrant 1
(High Preferred - Low Actual)	(High Preferred - High Actual)
DM22	HT1 ISI9 HT2 HT17 SR5 SR18 DM6 HT24 SR7 HT25 SR8
Quadrant 3	**Quadrant 4**
(Low Preferred - Low Actual)	(Low Preferred - High Actual)
ISN3 ISI14 DM23 ISI4 ISI15 DM10 ISN16 ISN11 ISI19 ISI12 HT20 ISN13 DM21	

SR-Parents as supporters and recipients
HT-Parents as home tutors
ISI-Parents as volunteers - instructional activities
ISN-Parents as volunteers - non instructional activities
DM-Parents as decision makers

Figure 5 . Quadrant assessment matrix for parents' perceptions of the actual and preferred parental involvement.

advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies, represents the items with the greatest gap between parents' perceptions of actual and preferred involvement. It suggests that parents want greater participation in determining school policies related to curriculum, safety and discipline.

Quadrant 3. Quadrant 3 contains the items for which parents rated their actual involvement and preferred involvement as low. The items included in this quadrant are:

ISN3 Help prepare instructional materials, e.g. organize materials for science and art projects, copy materials

ISN11 Assist in the school library

ISN13 Assist with clerical tasks, e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials

ISN16 Supervise children on the playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses

ISI4 Help students with story writing, e.g. help edit, record as a student dictates story

ISI12 Assist students with computer activities

ISI14 Assist student(s) to practise a skill in the classroom

ISI15 Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom

ISI19 Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise, e.g. craft, culture, story telling

SR10 Assist with developing parent programs

HT20 Visit the classroom to observe a lesson

DM21 Act as an advocate for special interests, e.g. second language programs, band and art programs, special needs programs

DM23 Participate in school goal setting

Ten of the thirteen items refer to parents being present in the school. Though their placement would seem to indicate that parents are satisfied with their level of involvement in these activities, it is necessary to consider that parents wanted more involvement in all tasks. The items may have less importance to parents than those located in quadrants 1 and 2 but should not be ignored. Their placement may

indicate that parents are less comfortable with being in the school or have limited availability during school hours.

Discrepancy analysis was used to determine the extent of the differences between the perceived actual involvement and preferred involvement for each item. The measure of this is taken to be the difference between the means of preferred and actual involvement, and is referred to as the discrepancy for any particular item.

Table 12 (see Appendix E) summarizes the differences found for each sub group. Items are ranked according to these discrepancies. In the ranking, items 12 and 23, assisting students with computer activities and participating in school goal setting had the largest discrepancy (1.91). The last item, attending public activities such as concerts, with an actual mean of 4.66 and a preferred mean of 4.87, had the least discrepancy (0.21).

The ranking indicates the least discrepancy in those items in which parents report the highest levels of actual involvement. This suggests that parents are more satisfied with their involvement in these tasks. These activities should be maintained. The largest discrepancies are found in the items related to decision making and in-school involvement with instructional activities. The discrepancies indicate that these are items that provide opportunities for increased parental involvement. The items match those in which the majority of parents reported little or no actual involvement suggesting parents want involvement in a wider range of activities than currently appear to be available.

Summary

Parents indicated a preference for more involvement for all the tasks rated. Parents are most involved in the traditional roles of supporter and recipient and home tutor. For other roles, many parents reported little or no involvement. There were greater discrepancies between the parent's perceptions of actual and preferred involvement for tasks related to decision making and in-school volunteering. This suggests parents are less satisfied with their involvement and want opportunities to participate in these areas.

Teachers' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Parental Involvement

Question 2

What are the opinion of teachers regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

2.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by teachers?

Table 10 (see Appendix D) summarizes the response of teachers about the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools. The preferred mean score for each task is higher than the actual mean score. The differences were found to be significant for all task statements. This suggests that teachers want increased parental involvement in all areas. The mean scores for actual involvement range from 1.46 to 4.08, while the range of mean scores for preferred involvement is 2.52 to 4.84. Three items are rated by teachers as having a great deal of actual parent involvement. For these items, more than 50 percent of the respondents rated parental involvement as 4 or 5 indicating high involvement. These are (1) attendance at parent teacher conferences with 40 respondents (80 %) reporting high involvement, (2) attendance at public activities with 41 respondents (82 %) reporting high involvement, and (3) assistance with field trips where 31 respondents (62 %) report high parental involvement. Overall, in the teachers' opinions there is little parental involvement within schools. On 12 of the 25 items rated, at least 35 percent of the teachers responding report no parental involvement. In contrast, teachers preferred little or no parental involvement for only one item, number 13, assistance with clerical tasks. Table 6 reports the ranked listing of the ten tasks in which teachers report the most parental involvement. Four items (2, 5, 7, 8) belong to the category, parents as supporters and recipients, while three items (2, 24, 25) represent parent involvement in home learning. The remaining three items involve parents in the school with instructional (9, 14) and non instructional (3) tasks. Eight of the tasks are included in the teachers' list of most preferred activities. Teachers indicate parents are supportive of school programs and assist their children with school work at home.

For most items teachers' opinions of the actual and preferred involvement show a remarkable contrast. In 21 of 25 items, many respondents (30 to 82 %) reported there was no or little actual parental involvement. For the same items except number 13, assistance with clerical tasks, teacher respondents reported a preference for high parental involvement with 42 to 97 percent choosing 4 or 5 on the scale. Five items did not follow this pattern. These items, (1) attending parent-teacher conferences, (2) attending public activities, (3) assisting with field trips, and (4) responding to newsletters and notices, represent traditional roles in which parents have involvement.

Table 6

Teachers' ranking for actual parent involvement

Rank	Item No	Task Statement	
1	7.	Attend public activities, e.g. concerts	(4)*
2	5.	Attend parent-teacher conferences	(3)
3	9.	Assist with field trips	(5)
4	18.	Respond to newsletters and notices sent by the school, e.g. return information and materials	(3)
5	24.	Participate in home reading programs	(2)
6	8.	Assist with fund raising	(7)
7	25.	Review school work brought home by children	---
8	2.	Help children with activities as requested by the teacher, e.g. reading, practise facts, etc.	(6)
9	14.	Assist students to practise a skill in the classroom	(5)
10	3.	Help prepare instructional materials, e.g. organize materials for science & art projects, copy materials, etc.	---

* Rank for preferred involvement

The distribution of teachers' responses to the questionnaire indicated teachers perceived differences between the actual and preferred involvement of

parents. The quadrant assessment model was used to examine the extent of the differences. Teachers' perceptions of the actual and preferred parental involvement are shown in Figure 6.

Quadrant 1. Items with high actual and high preferred scores placed in this quadrant are:

HT2 Help children with activities as requested by the teacher, e.g. reading, practise facts

HT24 Participate in home reading programs

HT25 Review school work brought home by children

SR5 Attend parent-teacher conferences

SR7 Attend public activities, e.g. concerts

SR8 Assist with fund raising

SR18 Respond to newsletters and notices sent home by the school, e.g. return information and materials

ISI9 Assist with field trips

The items represent the traditional contacts parents have with schools - attending parent-teacher conferences and school events and helping children with school work at home. These are tasks parents can and do perform whether or not school personnel encourage their participation.

Quadrant 2. The three items located in this quadrant are :

DM6 Attend parent council meetings such as parent councils,

HT17 Do extra activities suggested by the teacher, e.g. visit the library and museums, discuss current affairs, and

ISI19 Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise.

Teachers rated these items as having low scores for actual involvement and high scores for preferred involvement suggesting these items may be more important to consider than those in other quadrants.

Quadrant 3. Quadrant 3 containing items with low actual and low preferred mean scores has twelve items which are:

ISN3 Help prepare instructional materials, e.g. organize materials for science

Quadrant 2	Quadrant 1
(High Preferred - Low Actual)	(High Preferred - High actual)
DM6	HT2 SR18
HT17	SR5 HT24
ISI19	SR7 HT25
	SR8
	ISI9
Quadrant 3	**Quadrant 4**
(Low Preferred - Low Actual)	(Low Preferred - High Actual)
ISN3 ISN13 DM22	HT1
ISI4 ISI14 DM23	DM21
DM10 ISI15	
ISN11 ISN16	
ISI12 HT20	

SR-Parents as supporters and recipients
HT-Parents as home tutors
ISI-Parents as volunteers - instructional activities
ISN-Parents as volunteers - non instructional activities
DM-Parents as decision makers

Figure 6. Quadrant assessment matrix for teachers' perceptions of the actual and preferred parental involvement.

and art projects, copy materials, etc.

ISN11 Assist in the school library

ISN13 Assist with clerical tasks, e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials

ISN16 Supervise children on the playground, in the lunchroom, or waiting for buses

ISI4 Help students with story writing, e.g. help edit, record as a student dictates story, etc.

ISI12 Assist students with computer activities

ISI14 Assist students to practise a skill in the classroom

ISI15 Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom

DM10 Assist with developing parent programs

DM22 Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies.

DM23 Participate in school goal setting

HT20 Visit the classroom to observe a lesson

Eight of the items require parents to be in the school during the regular school day. Three of the remaining items give parents input into the programs and policies of the school. Their placement indicates these are not priority items. As teachers had higher preferred mean scores than actual mean scores for all items on the questionnaire, these items need to be considered.

Quadrant 4. The items located in this quadrant have a low preferred mean score and a high actual mean score. Location suggests that parents have more involvement in the tasks than is preferred. The two items located in this quadrant do not fit the pattern. The items and their means scores are:

HT1 Help children with homework

Preferred mean score: 3.94 Actual mean score: 2.6

DM21 Act as an advocate for special interests, e.g. second language programs, band and art programs, special education programs

Preferred mean score: 3.75 Actual mean score: 2.45

The preferred mean scores are below the mean of the mean scores used to determine placement in the matrix but the rating of actual involvement is lower than the preferred involvement mean score.

Discrepancy analysis was used to determine the extent of the differences between the actual and preferred parental involvement for each item as perceived by teachers. Table 12 (see Appendix E) summarizes the differences and ranks the items according to the discrepancies. In the ranking, item 16, supervise children on the playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses, has the largest discrepancy (2.21). The last item with a discrepancy of 0.54 is item 7, attends public activities such as concerts.

Parents' attendance at school events and parent-teacher conferences and assistance with field trips are activities which have small discrepancies between the actual and preferred mean scores. Teachers rated these items as having higher actual involvement than others on the questionnaire. Though teachers indicated a desire for increased involvement in all items, the involvement in these items appears satisfactory. Eight of the thirteen items with largest discrepancies are related to instruction. Four are activities which parents can do at home to support classroom instruction. Four would bring parents into the classroom as instructional aides. This suggests teachers feel parental involvement with their child's learning is lower than desired. The other items having large discrepancies include attendance at school advisory meetings, parent education programs, involvement with school goal setting, and participation in advisory councils. Currently, there is little participation reported for these items. The majority of teacher respondents prefer moderate to very high (3 to 5 on the scale) parental involvement in these areas. Teachers' willingness to broaden the scope of parental involvement opportunities and parental input into school policies and practices is suggested.

Summary

For all items on the questionnaire, teachers prefer more parent involvement than currently occurs. Teachers rated current parent involvement low for most

items. Activities such as attendance at school events and parent teacher conferences are rated by teachers as having a moderate to high degree of parent involvement. Teachers reported a preference for moderate to high parental involvement in all tasks rated. This indicates teachers want more parental involvement in a wider range of activities than they believe currently occurs.

Administrators' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Parental Involvement

Question 3

What are the opinions of administrators regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

3.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

The responses of administrators to the questionnaire are summarized in Table 11 (see Appendix D). For the items, the preferred mean scores ranging from 4.96 to 2.54 are higher than the actual mean scores with a range from 4.25 to 1.54. The differences between actual and preferred scores were found to be significant for all tasks except attendance at public activities and assistance with field trips. Fifty percent or more of the respondents rated three items, attendance at parent-teacher conferences and school events and assistance with field trips, high for actual involvement. All administrators reported at least moderate involvement (rate of 3 on questionnaire) for attendance at parent-teacher conferences and school activities such as concerts.

Many administrators (25% to 65%) report no parental involvement for eleven items listed below with the percentage of respondents reporting no involvement:

ISI3 Help prepare instructional materials, e.g. organize materials for science and art projects, copy materials, etc. (25%)

ISN11 Assist in the school library (37.5 %)

ISI12 Assist students with computer activities (37.5 %)

ISN13 assist with clerical tasks, e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials (50 %)

ISI15 Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom (29.3 %)

ISN16 Supervise children on the playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses (58.3 %)

HT20 Visit the classroom to observe a lesson (50 %)

DM6 Attend school advisory meetings such as parent councils (30.4%)

DM10 Assist with developing parent programs (54.2%)

DM22 Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies (30.4%) and

DM23 Participate in school goal setting (65.2%).

For the items involving parents assisting in schools and classrooms, administrators indicated a preference for moderate to high (rated 3 to 4) parental involvement. As administrators rated the current involvement in these items from none to moderate (scores of 1 to 3) this indicates administrators see parental involvement in schools as important. Administrators indicated a stronger preference for parental involvement in decision making choosing preference scores ranging from moderate (rate of 3) to very high (5). Parental involvement in decision making can be concluded to be minimal from the administrator's perspective. For the items ranked, 75 percent or more of the administrators reported little or no parental involvement. In contrast, 70 percent of the administrators preferred high parental involvement choosing scores of 4 and 5 for preferred involvement. This indicates that administrators feel parents should have some voice in the decisions and policies of the school. For some schools this may mean parents are informed of the issues and have an opportunity to provide input which may influence the decision makers. For others, parents and teachers may be part of the decision making team.

Administrators rated overall parental involvement as low. Other than the involvement in conferences and special events previously mentioned, few items

were rated as having high involvement. Table 7 summarizes the items having the most involvement as perceived by administrators.

Table 7

Administrators' Ranking of Actual Parent Involvement

Rank	Item No.	Task Statement	
1	7.	Attend public activities such as concerts	(1)*
2	5.	Attend parent-teacher conferences	(1)
3	9.	Assist with field trips	(6)
4	18.	Respond to newsletters and notices	(1)
5	8.	Assist with fund raising	(3)

* Rank for preferred involvement

The distribution of administrator's responses to the questionnaire indicated administrators' perceived differences between the actual and preferred parental involvement. Mean scores were used to plot each item on a quadrant assessment matrix. the results are shown in Figure 7.

Quadrant 1. The items located in this quadrant were rated as having high actual and high preferred involvement. The task statements placed in quadrant 1 are:

HT1 Help children with homework

HT2 Help children with activities as requested by the teacher, e.g. reading, practise facts, etc.

HT24 Participate in home reading programs

HT25 Review school work brought home by children

SR5 Attend parent-teacher conferences

SR7 Attend public activities, e.g. concerts

SR8 Assist with fund raising

Quadrant 2	Quadrant 1
(High Preferred - Low Actual)	(High Preferred - High Actual)
DM6	HT1 ISI9
DM10	HT2 SR18
HT17	SR5 HT24
ISI19	SR7 HT25
	SR8
Quadrant 3	**Quadrant 4**
(Low Preferred - Low Actual)	(Low Preferred - High Actual)
ISN3 ISI14 DM22	
ISI4 ISI15 DM23	
ISN11 ISN16	
ISI12 HT20	
ISN13 DM21	

*SR-Parents as supporters and recipients
HT-Parents as home tutors
ISI-Parents as volunteers - instructional activities
ISN-Parents as volunteers - non instructional activities
DM-Parents as decision makers

Figure 7 . Quadrant assessment matrix for administrators' perceptions of the actual and preferred parental involvement.

SR18 Respond to newsletters and notices sent home by the school, e.g. return information and materials

ISI9 Assist with field trips

Though these items are rated by principals as having the highest levels of actual involvement, principals indicated a higher level of involvement was preferred. At the least, it is necessary to maintain current involvement in these areas.

Quadrant 2. The items located in quadrant 2 with low actual involvement and high preferred involvement. These items are considered important as they have a large gap between the actual and the preferred scores. The items located in this quadrant are:

DM6 Attend school advisory meetings such as parent councils

DM10 Assist with developing parent education programs

HT17 Visit child's classroom to observe a lesson, and

ISI19 Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise, e.g. craft, culture, story telling.

To participate in these items parents must be available during school hours or meetings need to be scheduled when both parents and school personnel are available. The items suggest administrators want parents to be more informed about classroom activities and school programs, policies and practices.

Quadrant 3. The twelve task statements in quadrant 3 with low mean scores for actual and preferred parent involvement are:

ISN3 Help prepare instructional materials, e.g. organize materials for science and art projects, copy materials, etc.

ISN11 Assist in the school library

ISN13 Assist with clerical tasks, e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials

ISN16 Supervise children on the playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses

ISI4 Help students with story writing, e.g. help edit., record as a student dictates a story

ISI12 Assist students with computer activities

ISI14 Assist students to practise a skill in the classroom

ISI15 Supervise games, learning centres, and small group activities in the classroom

HT20 Visit the classroom to observe a lesson

DM21 Act as an advocate for special interests, e.g. second language programs, band and art programs, special needs programs

DM22 Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline

DM23 Participate in school goal setting

As all items were given higher preferred scores than actual scores by administrators, these items should not be ignored in plans for increasing parental involvement. Their placement indicates they have a lower priority than those in quadrant 2.

Quadrant 4. No items were located in this quadrant.

Administrators indicated that there are differences between the parental involvement currently happening in their schools and their preferred parental involvement. Discrepancy analysis was used to determine the extent of the differences perceived by administrators. The differences between the administrators' rating of actual and preferred involvement are summarized in Table 12 (see Appendix E). Table 12 reports the rank of each item with the largest discrepancy ranked number 1. Item 10, assist with developing parent programs, has the largest discrepancy. The smallest discrepancy (0.42) was found in item 7, attend public activities such as concerts.

Among the 10 tasks with the greatest discrepancies between actual and preferred scores, principals' rating included one task from the following categories: (a) parents as home tutors, and (b) parents as supporters and recipients; two tasks were included from (a) parents as volunteers in instructional tasks and (b) parents as volunteers in non-instructional tasks; and four tasks are related to parents as decision-makers. Each area of parental involvement included in the questionnaire is represented by these task statements suggesting administrators recognize the need to have parents involved in a wide range of activities. The number of items related

to decision making may indicate administrators want to include parents in an area in which they have had little previous involvement. It may also be a reflection of Manitoba Education's recent efforts to promote school advisory councils throughout the province. Increased participation in these activities would increase parent visibility within the school which has benefits for students as discussed previously.

Summary

Administrators report little parental involvement for most task statements on the questionnaire. Administrators indicated high levels of parent involvement for three tasks which are: (a) attendance at parent-teacher conferences, (b) attendance at special events, and (c) assistance with field trips. For each task statement, the preferred mean scores were higher than the actual mean scores indicating the administrators' preference to have more involvement in all areas.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Question 4

What differences exist between the opinions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

Respondents were asked to add any additional observations they had regarding parental involvement. The comments from respondents in each group have provided additional information regarding: (a) opportunities for involvement, (b) benefits of involvement, and (c) increasing parental involvement. This information and the data supplied from the questionnaire are considered in this section.

Table 8 summarizes the rating of actual parental involvement for each subgroup. The information reported by category indicates the number of items rated as low (score of 1), very high (score of 5), and high (score 4 and 5). Items were counted if 25 percent or more of the respondents chose the score. There is agreement among the respondent groups that parents are the most involved as

Table 8

Rating of items by category

Area	Number Possible		Score 1	4&5	5
Supporters & Recipients	4	P	-	4	4
	4	T	-	4	-
	4	A	-	4	-
Home Tutors	6	P	1	6	-
	6	T	2	3	2
	6	A	1	1	1
In-school Instructional	6	P	4	4	-
	6	T	5	1	1
	6	A	2	1	-
In-school Non-instructional	4	P	4	1	-
	4	T	4	-	-
	4	A	4	-	-
Decision Makers	5	P	4	2	1
	5	T	4	-	-
	5	A	4	-	-
Totals	25	P	13	17	9
		T	15	8	3
		A	11	6	1

P- parents T- teachers A- administrators

supporters and recipients and least involved as decision makers and in the school as volunteers. Parents rated their involvement higher than teachers and administrators. The means for actual involvement which are 3.01 for parents, 2.43 for teachers and 2.43 for administrators also indicate a slightly higher rating by parents. All parents responding to the survey had some level of involvement in the school which may account for the higher ratings. The category, parents as home tutors

which includes tasks ranging from reviewing work brought home by the child(ren) to doing learning activities suggested by the school with the child(ren), had the most disagreement. Respondents' comments supported the limited number of parents involved in the school. As one parent stated

> For the past four years I have been giving 9 to 15 hours a week to the school. In that time I have seen quite a lot [sic]of changes. The only thing that hasn't changed is the volunteers. We are the *same* ones every year.

Others describes the involvement as *almost nil* and *I find myself and a few others at the school often.* Teachers and administrators also reported few in-school volunteer parents. One teacher reported

> I find that all in all as the years go on, it is more and more difficult to get parents' help or support. Either they don't care or as many of us, they have jobs and it is hard to offer in the classroom support or supervision on school or extra curricular activities.

An analysis of variance found there was no significant difference in the perception of actual parent involvement between the groups for eleven task statements. With the exception of assist with field trips, the involvement in the tasks was rated as low. The tasks were:

9. Assist with field trips
10. Assist with developing parent programs
11. Assist in the library
12. Assist students with computer activities
13. Assist with clerical tasks, e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials
14. Assist students to practise a skill in the classroom
15. Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom
16. Supervise children on the playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses
19. Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise
21. Act as an advocate for special interests, e.g. second language programs, band & art programs, special needs programs
23. Participate in school goal setting.

For the remaining statements, the perceptions of parents regarding actual involvement differed significantly from the perceptions of teacher and administrators (11 tasks) or teachers alone (3 tasks). Teachers and administrators indicated less involvement than parents. A few teachers' comments indicated frustration at the unavailability of parents to help students at home. In the words of one teacher

> Parents seem too busy to help their students with their learning. In my class students take books home on Friday to read to someone. Many times I hear they have been told to read by themselves. My students need a role model or someone who can make sure they are reading the correct print.

Parents indicated a high degree of involvement with homework activities (mean score of 3.85). This example reflects the difference in perceptions of teachers and parents regarding parent support in school activities the child does at home.

The data suggest a preference for increased parent involvement in all categories. The preferred mean scores were higher than the actual means scores for all task statements in each group, parents, teachers and administrators. An analysis of variance between the groups preferred scores found few significant differences. The preferred mean scores were found to be significantly different for five task statements which are:

2. Help children with activities as requested by the teacher, e.g. reading, practise facts
16. Supervise children on playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for busses
20. Visit a classroom to observe a lesson
22. Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies
23. Participate in school goal setting.

For all tasks statements except supervising children parents had the highest preferred mean score.

The suggestion that parents need to have more involvement in a wider range of areas was supported by participants' comments. Parents wrote *we have teachers who are computer illiterate and parents who are computer literate who are not*

being used, as a parent of a 'special needs' child, I would rather be involved in the planning of programs, I look forward to our school advisory council, and *what about parental involvement in extracurricular activities? ...some parents are talented people.* One administrator felt schools should take the responsibility for the limited involvement of parents and wrote

> In many areas (goal setting, helping out at school, etc.) the failure is the schools. We don't know what we want parents to do, how to organize them or what decisions they should share in.
> Parents not helping kids at home is their own fault. <u>But</u> we could do more to help them out, show them what to do, give them skills.

The comments suggest the needs of the school and talents/skills of parents, the activities in which parents and schools want parental involvement, and the need to co-ordinate and organize the efforts have to be considered in plans to increase parental involvement.

Comparing the quadrant assessment matrices developed for each participant group show seven of the eleven task statements in quadrant 1 and ten of thirteen task statements found in quadrant 3 are common to each group. Quadrant 1 contains the tasks the participants perceived as having high actual involvement and high preferred involvement. The tasks in quadrant 3 are those with lower actual involvement and lower preferred involvement. These task statements found in quadrants 1 and 3 have the least importance to the participants. Considering the first finding in the study that all participants preferred more parental involvement in all task statements, the tasks have importance for planning increased parental involvement.

In total five statements are found in quadrant 2. The statements located in quadrant 2 have a preferred mean score higher than the mean of the mean scores for preferred involvement and an actual mean score lower than the mean of the mean scores for actual involvement. The statements are:

DM6 Attend parent advisory meetings such as parent councils (Administrators)

DM10 Assist with developing parent programs (Administrators)

DM22 Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies. (Parents/administrators)

HT17 Do extra activities suggested by the teacher, e.g. visit the library and museums, discuss current affairs with children (Teachers/administrators)

ISI19 Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise (Teachers/administrators)

The gap between the preferred and actual scores marks these tasks as priority items for the groups involved. Five task statements were identified by administrators. Of these two were shared by teachers and one by parents. Three task statements refer to parent participation in decision making. This suggests decision making may be of more concern than the other areas. If so, it was not a concern indicated by teachers.

Table 12 (see Appendix E) summarizes the discrepancies found between the preferred and actual mean scores for each task statement. The items were ranked according to the differences found for each participant group. The task with the greatest difference was ranked number one. The use of this type of ranking assumes that the items with the greatest discrepancy between the actual and preferred scores are more important than those with less discrepancy.

An examination of the items shows little agreement in the ranking of the items. For parents the statements with the highest priority all involve contact with the school as a volunteer or as part of the decision making process. This suggests parents want first hand knowledge about their children's schooling and a voice in the policies and practises of the school. Parents supported more involvement in instructional activities by their added comments. As the mother of a kindergarten student stated *I'd like to play more of a role in basic learning rather than just the fun activities.* Another indicated willingness to be involved *anywhere possible that will help the learning environment.* Most items identified by teachers involve direct assistance at school such as supervision of students on the playground and

helping students with classroom activities and home learning activities such as reviewing class work and home reading activities. Teachers included parent attendance at parent council meeting and parent involvement in school advisory councils regarding curriculum, safety and discipline policies. All the tasks included are directly related to the daily work of teachers. Assistance with instructional activities have direct benefits for students in terms of achievement and for teachers in time management. Parental involvement with school policy decisions may increase parent support for the policies implemented which teachers are responsible for implementing. Administrators identified four of five possible task statements related to decision making in the six tasks with largest discrepancies indicating this has high concern. Of all the categories included decision making is the area in which administrators would have the most involvement. As school advisory councils have been identified as a priority in school reform for Manitoba schools the large discrepancies may indicate an increased awareness of involvement in this area. More agreement was found among items with lower discrepancies. Included in this group are attendance at parent teacher conferences, attendance at school events and assistance with field trips.

Participants added comments about the benefits of parental involvement. For parents increased awareness about the school, teacher's expectations and their child's classroom were mentioned most often as benefits. The awareness of teachers regarding parents can also change. One parent referring to teachers said *often they [teachers] are surprised someone cares.* A second benefit mentioned was an increased understanding between children, parents and teachers. The need for the school to involve parents especially those with special needs in programming decisions was put forth very strongly by two parents. For these parents their involvement meant the school personnel would be able to make better decisions about their child's program with the information. One teacher referred to an increased comfort level between parents and teachers when they were present in the school. It is necessary for both parties to be comfortable for parent involvement to be effective. Both parents and teachers mentioned that parents had a better

understanding of teaching when they were involved.

A number of participants offered suggestions for increasing parental involvement. The openness of the school administration and staff was mentioned most often. Increased communication was mentioned as a way to increase parents ' awareness that their help was valued. One parent included a caution that the communication must be accompanied by real efforts to have parents involved. Respondents mentioned the need for education with regard to teachers' ability to interact with other adults and to how parents can assist their children. Parents judged as unwilling to help may be unaware of the school's expectations and how to meet them.

Overall the tone of the comments revealed a hopefulness that parent involvement was worthwhile and can be increased with the cooperation and understanding of parents, teachers and administrators. The majority believed parents are interested and willing to be involved. As one administrator commented *most parents are very busy but will readily give up any free time they have for their child.*

Summary

Respondent groups agreed there was little actual involvement in schools. The greatest involvement of parents was in activities such as attendance at school concerts, attendance at parent-teacher conferences and in home learning activities. Parents rated actual involvement slightly higher than teachers and administrators. Participants adding comments, viewed parental involvement as those activities which brought parents into the school, usually during school hours. The participant groups indicated a preference for more involvement in all tasks rated. The groups did not agree on the areas that were most important for increased involvement. Parents indicated a preference for more opportunities to be involved with instruction and in policy setting. Teachers want more parent support with instructional tasks, in school and at home. Administrators indicated parent involvement in decision making was the highest priority. Participant comments

indicated an awareness of the benefits to students, teachers/schools and parents when parent involvement exists.

Chapter Five

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding actual and preferred parental involvement. Five areas of parental involvement, parents as supporters and recipients, parents as home tutors, parents as volunteers in instructional tasks, parents as volunteers in non-instructional tasks, and parents as decision makers, were included in the questionnaire.

This chapter is divided into three parts: (a) the summary of the study, (b) discussion of the conclusions, and (c) implications and suggestions for further research.

Summary of the Study

The Problem. The problem investigated in this study was the perceived differences of parents, teachers and administrators regarding the actual and preferred parental involvement in order to determine the areas in which more involvement is desired. Answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What are the opinions of parents regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

1.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by parents?

2. What are the opinions of teachers regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

2.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by teachers?

3. What are the opinions of administrators regarding the actual and perceived involvement of parents in the elementary school?

3.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred

involvement of parents as perceived by administrators?

4. What differences are there between the opinions of parents, teachers, and administrators regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

Significance of the study. Few studies of how stakeholders in education perceive parental involvement have been done. This study has identified differences between the perceptions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in northern and rural Manitoba schools. The literature indicates that many forms of parent involvement are beneficial but comprehensive long term programs are more effective (Gordon, 1979; Henderson, 1987). Knowing the current level of involvement and the preferences of the groups is necessary for program planning. Manitoba Education has included parent involvement as one of six priorities for school reform. School personnel are being asked "to create ways for all parents to be involved in their child's school and schooling" (Manitoba Education, 1994, p. 27). Schools will not be able to involve many parents unless the opportunities provided by the school match those desired by parents.

Respondents. Fifty-three parents, fifty mothers and three fathers, responded to the survey. Sixty-two percent work outside the home. Twenty-three percent have preschool children. All have regular involvement in the school.

Of the fifty teachers responding to the survey, 40 were female. There were respondents from each grade level from kindergarten to grade 6 with an average of 16.7 years of teaching experience. Seventy-one percent report current use of parent help in their classrooms.

Twenty-four administrators responded to the survey. The majority were principals (91 %). Their administrative experience varied from one year to more than 25 years with the average being 14.9 years.

Research Design. Data were collected through two part questionnaires, one for each respondent group. Part I of the questionnaire asked for background information. Part II required the respondents to rate 25 task statements describing

activities in which parents might be involved. The task statements describe five areas of involvement. Each item was rated twice. First, the respondents gave their perceptions of actual involvement for the task. Second, the preferred level of involvement was indicated for each task.

Questionnaires were mailed to school administrators for distribution to teachers and parents. Stamped addressed envelopes were included to ease return of the questionnaires.

Responses were coded for computer analysis. The analysis consisted of (1) frequency distribution of the responses, (2) means scores for the actual and preferred involvement for each task statement by group, (3) quadrant assessment analysis for each group and (4) discrepancy analysis by group.

Summary of the Findings

Question 1. What are the opinions of parents regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in the elementary school?

1.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by parents?

Parents rated the actual involvement of parents lower than the preferred involvement for all task statements. The involvement in two roles, parents as recipients and supporters and parents as home tutors, had higher mean scores than involvement in other categories.

Parents indicated a desire for more involvement in all areas. Parents identified tasks related to decision making and participation in in-school instructional tasks as having the most discrepancy between actual and preferred involvement.

Question 2. What are the opinions of teachers regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

2.1 To what extent are there differences between the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by parents?

Teachers perceived the actual involvement of parents was lower than

preferred involvement for all tasks rated. Teachers indicated (1) there was little parental involvement in elementary schools, (2) parents were most involved in attending parent-teacher conferences, attending special events, and assisting with field trips and (3) a strong preference for more parental involvement with tasks related to instructional activities in the school and at home. Parent involvement in parents councils was also identified by teachers as an area in which preferred involvement was much higher than actual involvement.

Question 3. What are the opinions of administrators regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

3.1. To what extent are there differences in the actual and preferred involvement of parents as perceived by administrators?

For all task statements, administrators indicated the actual involvement of parents was less than the preferred involvement. Administrators reported high actual involvement in three tasks, attendance at special school events, attendance at parent-teacher conferences, and assistance with field trips. For the remaining tasks, administrators indicated little or no parental involvement. For all tasks, administrators indicated a preference for moderate to high involvement. Two areas, involvement in decision making and instructional tasks within the school/classroom, were identified as having the highest discrepancies between actual and preferred involvement.

Question 4. What differences exist between the opinions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding actual and preferred involvement of parents in elementary schools?

Parents, teachers and administrators agreed in their perception that there is little parent involvement in elementary schools. They also agreed parents are most involved as supporters and recipients, attending school events and conferences and least involved in decision making and in the schools as volunteers. Parents perceived actual parental involvement to be slightly higher than teachers and administrators. There was the most disagreement concerning parental involvement as home tutors. Parents perceived involvement as home tutors to be high, teachers

perceived it as moderate and administrators as low. More involvement was preferred in all categories by parents, teachers and administrators. Each group identified different tasks as priorities in terms of increased involvement. Parents identified decision making and in-school instructional tasks as priorities for increased involvement. Teachers identified tasks related to parents supporting classroom instruction both in the classroom and at home. Administrators priorized parent involvement in decision making.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

1. There were differences in the perceptions of parents, teachers and administrators regarding the actual and preferred involvement of parents.

2. Parent, teachers and administrators perceived that actual parent involvement is low. Most parental involvement occurred in the area of parents as supporters and recipients. This involvement was in peripheral activities - attendance at concerts, parent-teacher interviews, and responding to newsletters. Parents perceived more involvement in home learning activities than teachers and administrators.

3. Parents, teachers and administrators value parental involvement in a range of areas and would support plans to increase involvement.

4. Parents, teachers and administrators differ in their perceptions of high priority areas for involvement. Parents identified instructional tasks and decision making. Administrators shared decision making as a priority with parents. Teachers, less concerned with decision making, perceived instructional tasks and home learning as priority areas for increased parental involvement. Increased parent involvement in these areas would effect the nature of the relationship between parents and the school.

Implications

The major finding of this study was that there are differences in the

perceptions of the three groups, parents, teachers and administrators. The differences have implications for planning parent involvement programs, the relationship between parents and the school, and the roles of parents, teachers and administrators.

1. The emphasis on increased parent involvement indicated by Manitoba Education makes it necessary for each group to be aware of the perceptions held by the other groups. Knowing what the other groups mean by the term, parent involvement, and their expectations for each other, will increase their ability to develop parent involvement programs which are meaningful to the participants.

2. Increasing the areas in which parents are involved indicates a change in attitude about the relationship of parents and the school. Currently the school is seen to deliver a service to parents and children over which they have limited control. When parents become involved in instructional tasks such as home learning activities and tutoring in classrooms, parents take on some responsibility for student achievement. The relationship between the school and parents moves from a delivery of service model to a partnership model (Davies, 1987). The inclusion of parents in decision making extends the partnership model assuming a collaborative relationship between parents, teacher and administrators.

3. Teachers, parents and administrators need to be included in planning for increased parent involvement. Each group indicated a preference for increased involvement in all areas. As the groups disagreed on the priority of the areas, the process of program planning must provide an opportunity to resolve differences and gain more understanding of the others' viewpoints.

4. There must be commitment by teachers, parents and administrators to the parent involvement programs implemented. Research indicates parent involvement is most effective when programs are comprehensive, long lasting and well-planned (Henderson, 1987; Gordon, 1979; Flaxman & Inger, 1991). Davies (1991) contends that school-family partnerships will be little more than rhetoric unless teachers are involved in the design, committed to success, and see the plan as beneficial. This is no less true for the other partners.

To design a successful program, the partners need information about the benefits of parental involvement in a variety of tasks. Each type of parental involvement has its own function and benefits (Epstein, 1985; Henderson, 1987). Information will enable them to determine goals and include parent involvement to help meet the goals. Planning a program which increases involvement in steps over a few years will allow them to monitor and adapt the program as necessary. Involvement in the planning ensures that the interests of each group are included increasing their commitment to the plan. Regular monitoring of the implementation increases the awareness of the success of the plan and helps overcome the weaknesses.

5. Leadership is needed to support parental involvement. Though much has been written about shared leadership (Sergiovanni, 1979; Barth, 1991), the principal is still seen as the leader in most schools. Principals can ensure teachers have current information about parent involvement, reward the efforts of teachers using successful involvement strategies and promote the leadership of teachers to develop and test new strategies/programs for parent involvement.

Increased parent involvement requires an attitude of mutual respect and two way interaction between parents and teachers. Principals can show leadership in ensuring that the practises of the school reflect this attitude. Respect can be shown in the way the school communicates with parents. For example, written communication needs to be free of educational jargon. Principals can be responsible for developing mechanisms for two-way communication between teachers and parents. Administrators establish the norms of teacher behaviour by clearly stating expected behaviours and rewarding teacher practises.

6. There is a need to move parental involvement from rhetoric to practise. Reviews of the research indicate there are few systematic efforts to encourage parent involvement though it is generally endorsed by teachers and parents (Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1992; Henderson, 1987; Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Swap, 1987). Recognition of the key role teachers have as potential links between home and school is needed to move towards more parent involvement. The education of

teachers has not prepared them to work effectively with adults. Few teachers receive preservice or inservice training about parental involvement (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; McAffee, 1987). The educational needs of teachers which have to be addressed include: (a) interpersonal skills for effective communication, (b) information needs regarding the research on parent involvement, and (c) information on how to manage and develop this resource.

7. Shared decision making effects the roles and responsibilities of all participants. All participants will need knowledge of decision making processes. How decisions are made and who is involved in each area needs to be agreed upon by the participants. The principal will have a key role in providing information about decision making, establishing processes to determine the roles of parents in the decision making process and modelling collaboration and mutual respect.

8. Support for parental involvement is needed from central office. Williams (1984) found that board policies and administrative leadership encouraging parental involvement was related to increased parent involvement. The literature indicates that general policies that allow each school to determine their own programs may be more effective that policies mandating specific involvement (Epstein, 1988; Gleadow, 1991).

Suggestions for Further Research

In addition to the conclusions and implications discussed above, this study has a number of possibilities for further studies.

1. The areas of parent involvement that benefit students at different grade levels could be investigated.

2. Surveys and interviews could be used to investigate the educational needs of teacher, administrators and parents to effectively implement parent involvement programs.

3. The preferences and attitudes of teachers and parents of children in two grades levels regarding parent involvement could be analyzed for significant differences.

Concluding Comments

Parent involvement has received much attention and been a focus of Manitoba Education during the last few years. The findings of this study indicate agreement among teachers, administrators and parents that more parent involvement in a wider range of roles is desirable. Yet the findings also indicate that only a few parents are actively involved in a few activities. For the most part, the involvement continues to be limited to the traditional roles of recipient of information and supporter of school programs. The comments added by the participants reinforced the notion that parental involvement continues to be viewed as volunteerism. No one indicated school-wide plans to promote increased involvement of parents within the system. At best, the findings suggest that teachers, administrators and parents have positive attitudes towards increased parental involvement in traditional and non traditional areas.

As an administrator who believes that parents need to be partners not clients, the findings indicate that there are problems to be solved. It is important to recognize that parent involvement is not the same for every family. Parents need to be viewed individually rather than collectively. Parents have their own unique personal perspectives and individual interests and needs. The need to provide opportunities for parents to gain expertise and to be partners and collaborators with the professionals is one challenge. Teachers and administrators who support the philosophy of home-school partnerships may feel uncomfortable or lack the knowledge needed to work with adults. Supporting staff development in working effectively with parents is a second challenge.

Professionals and parents need to be encouraged to expand their *comfort zones* in terms of being partners for the benefit of the child. The need to balance the professional autonomy of teachers and parents' expertise about their children is vital in promoting and supporting teacher-parent relationships and is a third challenge for administrators.

Clearly parents and educators have a stake in providing the best educational opportunities for children. While parental involvement is not a *cure-all* for the

problems facing schools, the benefits of home-school partnerships makes taking the challenge worthwhile.

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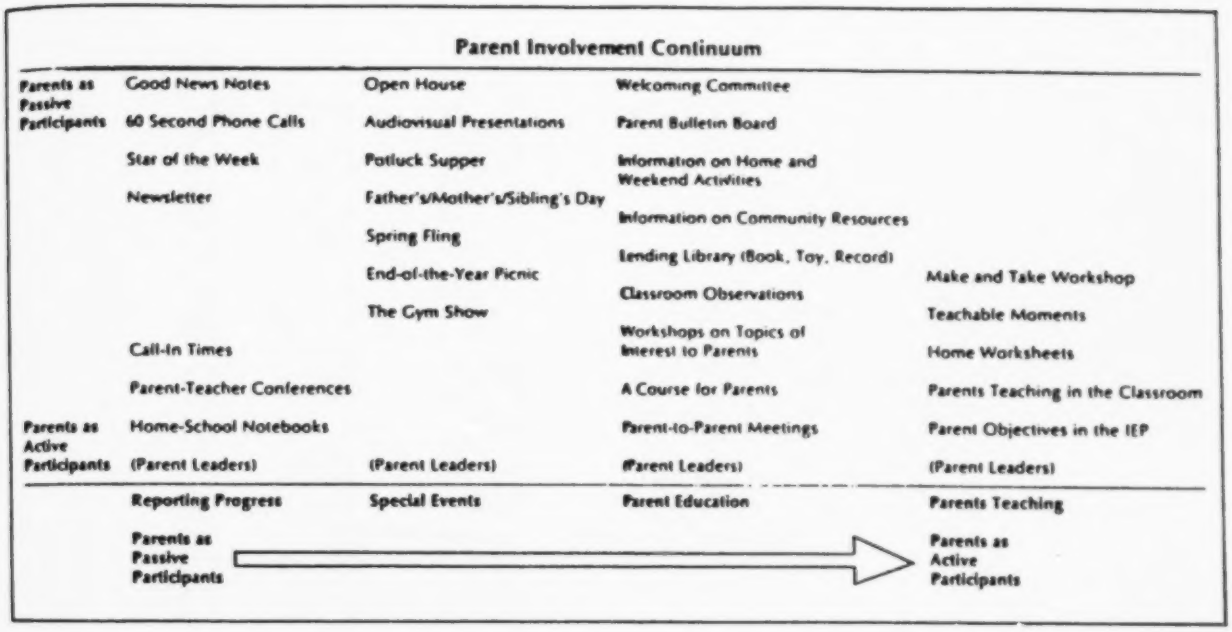
Appendix A

Models of Parental Involvement



Cervone & O'Leary, 1982, p. 48-89.

Examples of Practices to Promote, and Outcomes from, the Five Types of Parent Involvement

Type 1 Parenting	Type 2 Communicating	Type 3 Volunteering	Type 4 Learning at Home	Type 5 Representing Other Parents
Help All Families Establish Home Environments to Support Learning	**Design More Effective Forms of Communication to Reach Parents**	**Recruit and Organize Parent Help and Support**	**Provide Ideas to Parents on How to Help Child at Home**	**Recruit and Train Parent Leaders**
A Few Examples of Practices of Each Type				
School provides suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.	Teachers conduct conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-up as needed.	School volunteer program or class parent and committee of volunteers for each room.	Information to parents on skills in each subject at each grade. Regular homework schedule (once a week or twice a month) that requires students to discuss schoolwork at home.	Participation and leadership in PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, including advisory councils or committees such as curriculum, safety, and personnel.
Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child-rearing issues at each grade level.	Translators for language-minority families.	Parent Room or Parent Club for volunteers and resources for parents.	Calendars with daily topics for discussion by parents and students.	Independent advocacy groups.
	Weekly or monthly folders of student work are sent home and reviewed and comments returned.	Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.		
A Few Examples of Outcomes Linked to Each Type				
		Parent Outcomes		
Self-confidence in parenting.	Understanding school programs.	Understanding teacher's job and school programs.	Interaction with child as student at home.	Input to policies that affect child's education.
Knowledge of child development.	Interaction with teachers.	Familiarity with teachers.	Support and encouragement of schoolwork.	Feeling control of environment.
Understanding of home as environment for student learning.	Monitoring child's progress.	Comfort in interactions at school.	Participation in child's education.	
		Student Outcomes		
Security.	Student participation in parent-teacher conferences, or in preparation for conferences.	Increased learning skills receiving individual attention.	Homework completion.	Rights protected.
Respect for parent.	Better decisions about courses, programs.	Ease of communication with adults.	Self-concept of ability as learner.	Specific benefits linked to specific policies.
Improved attendance.			Achievement in skills practiced.	
Awareness of importance of school.				
		Teacher Outcomes		
Understanding of family cultures, goals, talents, needs.	Knowledge that family has common base of information for discussion of student problems, progress.	Awareness of parent interest, in school and children, and willingness to help.	Respect and appreciation of parents' time, ability to follow through and reinforce learning.	Equal status interaction with parents to improve school programs.
	Use of parent network for communications.	Readiness to try programs that involve parents in many ways.	Better designs of homework assignments.	Awareness of parent perspectives for policy development.

From: J. L. Epstein. (Forthcoming). "Five Types of Parent Involvement: Linking Practices and Outcomes." In *School and Family Connections: Preparing Educators to Involve Families.*

Epstein, 1989, p. 26.

Appendix B

The Questionnaires

416 -8510 · 111 Street • Edmonton, AB, T6G 1H7 • (403) 433- 7269 • fax

February 1995

As a Manitoba teacher on leave to complete my studies I am requesting your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire will be used to determine how parents, teachers and administrators perceive parental involvement in elementary programs.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. All respondents will remain anonymous. Information you provide will be held in strictest confidence and used only for the purpose of the study. After completing, please return the questionnaire in the postage paid addressed envelope provided by February 24, 1995.

The data you provide will be analyzed and processed for the research component of my Master of Education degree in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. No person, class or school will be identified in the final report. Participation is voluntary. For those who wish to participate, the results of the study will be made available through the local school board office.

If you have questions concerning the study I can be contacted at the address or phone number listed above.

Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Cynthia Minter

Teacher Survey

General Information

1. Grade level in which you do the majority of you teaching:
   (Circle) K 1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Teaching experience _____ years

3. Male____ Female_____

4. Do you currently use parent helpers in your classroom? Yes_____ No_____

Actual and Preferred Involvement of Parents

This section consists of items describing ways that parents may be involved in your classroom or school. Reflect on how parents have been involved with your class and in the school over the past year. In the first column, indicate how you see parent involvement to be. In the second column, indicate how you would prefer this involvement to be.

The Scale: The scale ranges from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning **never** and 5 meaning **always**. Circle the number which you feel indicates the level of actual and preferred involvement.

	Actual	Preferred
1. Help children with homework	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Help children with activities as requested by the teacher e.g. reading, practice facts, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Help prepare instructional materials e.g. organize materials for science & art projects, copy materials, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Help students with story writing e.g. help edit, record as a student dictates story, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Attend parent-teacher conferences	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Attend school advisory meetings such as parent councils	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Attend public activities e.g. concert	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Assist with fundraising	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Assist with field trips	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10.Assist with developing parent programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

	Actual	Preferred
11.Assist in the school library	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12.Assist students with computer activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. Assist with clerical tasks e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Assist student(s) to practise a skill in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. Supervise children on playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. Do extra activities suggested by the teacher e.g. visit the library & museums, discuss current affairs with their child	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. Respond to newsletters and notices sent by the school e.g. return information and materials	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise e.g. craft, culture, story telling	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. Visit your class to observe a lesson	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. Act as an advocate for special interests e.g. second language programs, band & art programs, special needs programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. Participate in school goal setting	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. Participate in home reading programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
25. Review school work brought home by children	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

If you have any observations about parental involvement that you wish to add please write them on the back of this sheet.

** Please return the survey in the envelope provided. Thank you.

Administrator Survey

General Information

1. Current position: Principal _____ Vice-principal _____

2. Male _____ Female _____

3. Administrative experience: _____ years

Actual and Preferred Involvement of Parents

This section consists of items describing ways that parents may be involved in schools. Reflect on how parents have been involved in your school over the past year. In the first column, indicate how you see parent involvement to be. In the second column, indicate how you would prefer this involvement to be.

The Scale: The scale ranges from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning **never** and 5 meaning **always**. Circle the number which you feel indicates the level of actual and preferred involvement.

	Actual	Preferred
1. Help children with homework	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Help children with activities as requested by the teacher e.g. reading, practice facts, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Help prepare instructional materials e.g. organize materials for science & art projects, copy materials, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Help students with story writing e.g. help edit, record as a student dictates story, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Attend parent-teacher conferences	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Attend school advisory meetings such as parent councils	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Attend public activities e.g. concert	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Assist with fundraising	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Assist with field trips	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10. Assist with developing parent programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11. Assist in the school library	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. Assist students with computer activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

	Actual	Preferred
13. Assist with clerical tasks e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Assist student(s) to practise a skill in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. Supervise children on playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. Do extra activities suggested by the teacher e.g. visit the library & museums, discuss current affairs with their child	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. Respond to newsletters and notices sent by the school e.g. return information and materials	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise e.g. craft, culture, story telling	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. Visit a classroom to observe a lesson	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. Act as an advocate for special interests e.g. second language programs, band & art programs, special needs programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. Participate in school goal setting	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. Participate in home reading programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
25. Review school work brought home by children	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

If you have any observations about parental involvement that you wish to add please write them on the back of this sheet.

** Please return the survey in the envelope provided. Thank you.

Parent Survey

General Information

The following information should be filled out by the parent or adult most involved with the child's schooling.

1. Do you work outside the home? Fulltime _____
   Parttime _____
   Not at all _____

2. I am the child's Father/male guardian _____
   Mother/female guardian____

3. Number of children attending the school _____
   Number of children of preschool age _____

Actual and Preferred Involvement of Parents

This section consists of items describing ways that parents may be involved in schools. Reflect on how parents have been involved in your child's school over the past year. In the first column, indicate how you see parent involvement to be. In the second column, indicate how you would prefer this involvement to be.

The Scale: The scale ranges from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning **never** and 5 meaning **always**. Circle the number which you feel indicates the level of actual and preferred involvement.

	Actual	Preferred
1. Help my child with homework	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Help my child with activities as requested by the teacher e.g. reading, practice facts, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Help prepare instructional materials e.g. organize materials for science & art projects, copy materials, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Help students with story writing e.g. help edit, record as a student dictates story, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Attend parent-teacher conferences	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Attend school advisory meetings such as parent councils	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Attend public activities e.g. concert	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Assist with fundraising	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Assist with field trips	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

	Actual	Preferred
10.Assist with developing parent programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11.Assist in the school library	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12.Assist students with computer activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. Assist with clerical tasks e.g. recording marks, filing and sorting materials, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Assist student(s) to practise a skill in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. Supervise children on playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for buses	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. Do extra activities suggested by the teacher e.g. visit the library & museums, discuss current affairs with your child	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. Respond to newsletters and notices sent by the school e.g. return information and materials	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise e.g. craft, culture, story telling	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. Visit your child's class to observe a lesson	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. Act as an advocate for special interests e.g. second language programs, band & art programs, special needs programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or discipline policies	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. Participate in school goal setting	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. Participate in home reading programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
25. Review school work brought home by your child	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

If you have any observations about parental involvement that you wish to add please write them on the back of this sheet.

** Please return the survey in the envelope provided. Thank you.

Appendix C

Correspondence

416 -8510 - 111 Street • Edmonton, AB, T6G 1H7 • (403) 433- 7289

December 1, 1994

_____
Superintendent
_____School Division No.__
_____
_____

Dear_____:

Please accept this letter as a request to include _____School Division in my research project. I am currently on leave from Flin Flon School Division to complete the Master of Education program in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

As a partial requirement for the program, each student must complete a research project or thesis. The thesis topic I have selected is an examination of the actual and preferred parent involvement in Manitoba elementary schools as perceived by parents, teachers and administrators. My study is being conducted in an effort to identify the possibilities for sustaining productive parental involvement in school programs.

As a principal and a teacher I appreciate that such requests are an intrusion. For this reason the involvement of the school will be minimal. I propose that surveys are sent to the principal for distribution to teachers (max. 3) of selected grade levels, parents (max.3) who have regular contact with the school, and school administrator(s). Addressed stamped envelopes will be provided so each participant can return the surveys directly. The survey will be short requiring only a few minutes to complete.

All respondents will remain anonymous. No individual, school or school district will be identified in any part of the thesis. Complete anonymity and ethical conduct is assured with regard to the participating parents and teachers.

If you are in agreement with this request, I would need the following information:
1. Names of elementary schools with a K-6 population over 200 (may be part of a larger grade distribution).
2. Administrator(s) names
3. number of students in grades 1-6.

At the completion of the study a summary of the results will be forwarded to the participating school divisions.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Minter

416 -8510 - 111 Street • Edmonton, AB, T6G 1H7 • (403) 433- 7269

_____School
_____
_____

February 5, 1995

Dear _____:

Re: Research on Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools

I am currently on leave from Flin Flon School Division to complete the Master of Education program in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. As a partial requirement of the program, I am required to complete some research. My research is being supervised by Dr. Ken Ward. I have chosen to examine parental involvement in Manitoba elementary schools as perceived by administrators, parents and teachers for my thesis topic. It is expected that the data collected will provide some insights regarding effective parental involvement in elementary schools.

I have received permission from the Superintendent to include your school division in my research and to contact you requesting your assistance in data collection. I realize that time is valuable and would greatly appreciate your assistance.

If you are willing to assist me, please distribute the enclosed questionnaires in the following manner:

Teacher survey - one teacher from each level K-2, 3-4, and 5-6
Parent surveys - 3 parents who have some regular involvement with your school
Administrator survey - principal or vice-principal

Addressed, stamped envelopes are provided for direct return of the questionnaires.

Participants in the study will remain anonymous. Throughout the study and final report no individual, school or school district will be identified.

When the study is completed results will be available through the school division office.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Minter

416 -8510 - 111 Street • Edmonton, AB, T6G 1H7 • (403) 433- 7269

March 2, 1995

Dear Colleague:

Re: Return of Questionnaire on Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools

This letter is a follow-up to the questionnaire that was distributed by the principal of your child's/children's school.

As the success of the research I am undertaking depends on a high rate of return of the questionnaire I would be very grateful if you could find time in your busy schedule to complete the questionnaire and return it to me using the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

If you have already sent in your questionnaire, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

C. Minter

416 -8510 - 111 Street • Edmonton, AB, T6G 1H7 • (403) 433- 7269

March 2, 1995

Dear Colleague:

Re: Request for Assistance - Research Project on Parental Involvement

Recently you would have received an envelope of questionnaires and a request to assist me with data collection for my research project.

As the success of the research I am undertaking depends on a high rate of return of the questionnaire I am following up on the original request for assistance. Once again I ask for your assistance in distributing these letters to those who received the original surveys.

If you chose not to have your school participate in the study I would appreciate having this information. Please return this letter with the name of your school to the above address if your school has not participated. This will enable me to have more accurate information for data analysis.

Once again, let me thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to assist me.

Sincerely,

C. Minter

Appendix D

Frequency of Responses

Table 9

Distribution of Parents' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Parental Involvement

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-always f	5-always %	Mean	S.D.
1.	Help my child with homework	A	52			6	11.5	13	25.0	16	30.8	17	32.7	3.846	1.017
		P	52			2	3.8	9	17.0	14	26.4	26	49.1	4.255	0.891
2.	Help with activities as requested by teacher	A	52			3	5.8	10	19.2	12	23.1	27	51.9	4.212	0.957
		P	52							8	15.4	44	84.6	4.846	0.364
3.	Help prepare instructional materials.	A	53	17	32.1	5	9.4	12	22.6	8	15.1	11	20.8	2.830	1.541
		P	51	5	9.8	4	7.8	15	29.4	11	21.6	16	31.4	3.569	1.285
4.	Help students with story writing	A	53	11	20.8	11	20.8	13	24.5	9	17.0	9	17.0	2.887	1.382
		P	49	2	3.8	3	5.7	11	20.8	21	39.6	12	22.6	3.776	1.026
5.	Attend parent-teacher conferences	A	52	1	1.9	3	5.8	2	3.8	5	9.6	41	78.8	4.577	0.957
		P	51					1	2.0	1	2.0	49	96.1	4.941	0.311
6.	Attend school advisory meetings.	A	53	8	15.1	10	18.9	10	18.9	4	7.5	21	39.5	3.377	1.535
		P	53	1	1.9	1	1.9	4	7.5	16	30.2	31	58.5	4.415	0.865
7.	Attend public activities	A	53			2	3.8	1	1.9	10	18.9	40	75.5	4.660	0.706
		P	52					1	1.9	5	9.6	46	88.5	4.865	0.397
8.	Assist with fund raising	A	53	3	5.7	4	7.5	11	20.8	15	28.3	20	37.7	3.849	1.183
		P	52	1	1.9	2	3.8	6	11.5	11	21.2	32	61.5	4.365	0.971
9.	Assist with field trips	A	53	5	9.4	4	7.5	13	24.5	19	35.8	12	22.6	3.547	1.202
		P	53					9	17.0	14	26.4	30	56.6	4.396	0.768

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-ALWAYS f	5-ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
10.	Assist with developing parent programs	A	53	21	39.6	11	20.8	9	17.0	7	13.2	5	9.4	2.321	1.370
		P	53	3	5.7	5	9.4	13	24.5	11	20.8	21	39.6	3.792	1.230
11.	Assist in the school library	A	53	31	58.5	11	20.8	7	13.2	3	5.1	1	1.9	1.717	1.026
		P	53	6	11.3	2	3.8	27	50.9	10	18.9	8	15.1	3.226	1.120
12.	Assist students with computer activities	A	53	35	66.0	11	20.8	3	5.7	2	3.8	2	3.8	1.585	1.027
		P	53	6	11.3			21	39.6	14	26.4	12	22.6	3.491	1.187
13.	Assist with clerical tasks	A	53	37	69.8	6	11.3	5	9.4	4	7.5	1	1.9	1.604	1.062
		P	53	11	20.8	7	13.2	22	41.5	10	18.9	3	5.7	2.755	1.159
14.	Assist students to practise a skill in classroom	A	53	19	35.8	11	20.8	15	28.3	7	13.2	1	1.9	2.245	1.142
		P	53			2	3.8	19	35.8	21	39.6	11	20.8	3.774	0.824
15.	Supervise small group activities in the classroom	A	53	18	34.0	10	18.9	10	18.9	11	20.8	4	7.5	2.491	1.353
		P	53	1	1.9	5	9.4	15	28.3	21	39.6	11	20.8	3.679	0.976
16.	Supervise playground, lunchroom and buses	A	53	32	60.4	9	17.0	7	13.2	2	3.8	3	5.7	1.774	1.171
		P	53	14	26.4	7	13.2	13	24.5	7	13.2	12	22.6	2.925	1.504
17.	Do extra activities suggested by teacher with my child	A	53	4	7.5	10	18.9	13	24.5	15	28.3	11	20.8	3.358	1.226
		P	52					12	23.1	14	26.9	26	50.0	4.269	0.819
18.	Respond to newsletters and notices	A	53	1	1.9	2	3.8	6	11.3	10	18.9	34	64.2	4.396	0.968
		P	52					2	3.8	3	5.8	47	90.4	4.865	0.444
19.	Visit my child's class to share expertise	A	5	19	36.5	10	19.2	10	19.2	9	17.3	4	7.7	2.404	1.347
		P	52	3	5.8	2	3.8	13	25.0	13	25.0	21	40.4	3.904	1.159
20.	Visit my child's class to observe a lesson	A	53	22	41.5	8	15.1	9	17.0	9	17.0	5	9.4	2.377	1.417
		P	52			2	3.8	16	30.8	15	28.8	19	36.5	3.981	0.918

No.	Task		N	f	1-NEVER %	f	2 %	f	3 %	f	4 %	f	5ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
21.	Act as an advocate for special interests	A	52	24	46.2	9	17.3	11	21.2	2	3.8	6	11.5	2.173	1.368
		P	52	3	5.8	5	9.6	15	28.8	13	25.0	16	30.8	3.654	1.186
22.	Participate in school advisory committees	A	53	23	43.4	8	15.1	7	13.2	7	13.2	8	15.1	2.415	1.525
		P	52	2	3.8	1	1.9	11	21.2	14	26.9	24	26.9	4.096	1.053
23.	Participate in school goal setting	A	53	29	54.7	9	17.0	9	17.0	3	5.7	3	5.7	1.906	1.213
		P	53	2	3.8	6	11.3	12	22.6	13	24.5	20	37.7	3.811	1.178
24.	Participate in home reading program	A	53	3	5.7	5	9.4	8	15.1	9	17.0	28	52.8	4.019	1.263
		P	52					3	5.8	1	1.9	48	92.3	4.865	0.486
25.	Review school work brought home by my child	A	53	1	1.9			4	7.5	12	22.6	36	67.9	4.547	0.798
		P	52							3	5.8	49	94.5	4.942	0.235

A - Actual P - Preferred

Table 10

Distribution of Teachers' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Parent Involvement

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5ALWAYS f	5ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
1.	Help children with homework.	A	50	7	14.0	13	26.0	24	48.0	5	10.0	1	2.0	2.600	0.926
		P	50	4	8.0	2	4.0	9	18.0	13	26.0	22	44.0	3.940	1.236
2.	Help with activities as requested by the teacher	A	50	4	8.0	11	22.0	22	44.0	7	14.0	6	12.0	3.000	1.866
		P	50	1	2.0			5	10.0	7	14.0	37	14.0	4.580	0.835
3.	Help prepare instructional materials.	A	49	19	38.8	11	22.4	11	22.4	6	12.2	2	4.1	2.204	1.207
		P	50	5	10.0	3	6.0	14	28.0	14	28.0	14	28.0	3.580	1.247
4.	Help students with story writing	A	49	17	34.7	17	34.7	9	18.4	3	6.1	3	6.1	2.143	1.155
		P	49	1	2.0	5	10.2	14	28.6	12	24.5	17	34.7	3.796	1.099
5.	Attend parent teacher conferences	A	50	2	4.0	2	4.0	6	12.0	23	46.0	17	34.0	4.020	1.000
		P	50	2	4.0							48	96.0	4.840	0.792
6.	Attend school advisory meetings.	A	46	11	23.9	26	56.5	5	10.9	1	2.2	3	6.5	2.109	1.016
		P	46	3	6.5			8	17.4	13	28.3	22	47.8	4.109	1.120
7.	Attend public activities	A	50	2	4.0	3	6.0	4	8.0	21	42.0	20	40.0	4.080	1.047
		P	50	2	4.0			2	4.0	7	14.0	39	78.0	4.620	0.901
8.	Assist with fund raising	A	50	10	20.0	9	18.0	14	28.0	11	22.0	6	12.0	2.880	1.304
		P	50	2	4.0	1	2.0	7	14.0	16	32.0	24	48.0	4.180	1.024
9.	Assist with field trips	A	50	4	8.0	2	4.0	13	26.0	12	24.0	19	38.0	3.800	1.229
		P	50					5	10.0	15	30.0	30	60.0	4.500	0.678

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-ALWAYS f	5-ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
10.	Assist with developing parent programs	A	45	22	48.9	15	33.3	4	8.9	2	4.4	2	4.4	1.822	1.072
		P	46	3	6.5	3	6.5	10	21.7	16	34.8	14	30.4	3.761	1.158
11.	Assist in the school library	A	48	24	50.0	11	22.9	8	16.7	4	8.3	1	2.1	1.896	1.096
		P	48	4	8.3	7	14.6	15	31.3	10	20.8	12	25.0	3.396	1.250
12.	Assist students with computer activities	A	49	29	59.2	11	22.4	5	10.2	2	4.1	2	4.1	1.714	1.080
		P	49	2	4.1	6	12.2	12	24.5	15	30.6	14	28.6	3.673	1.144
13.	Assist with clerical tasks	A	50	30	60.0	8	16.0	8	16.0	2	4.0	2	4.0	1.760	1.117
		P	50	19	38.0	4	8.0	15	30.0	6	12.0	6	12.0	2.520	1.418
14.	Assist student(s) to practise a skill in the classroom	A	50	20	40.0	12	24.0	7	14.0	9	18.0	2	4.0	2.220	1.266
		P	50	3	6.0	5	10.0	15	30.0	12	24.0	15	30.0	3.620	1.193
15.	Supervise small group activities in classroom	A	50	27	54.0	8	16.0	7	14.0	6	12.0	2	4.0	1.960	1.245
		P	50	6	12.0	9	18.0	14	28.0	7	14.0	14	28.0	3.280	1.371
16.	Supervise playground, lunchroom and buses	A	50	37	74.0	5	10.0	5	10.0			3	6.0	1.540	1.092
		P	48	6	12.5	1	2.1	10	20.8	14	29.2	17	35.4	3.729	1.317
17.	Do extra activities suggested by the teacher	A	47	12	25.5	20	42.6	13	27.7	1	2.1	1	2.1	2.128	0.900
		P	48	1	2.1	3	6.3	7	14.6	9	18.8	28	58.3	4.250	1.062
18.	Respond to newsletters and notices	A	50	2	4.0	7	14.0	17	34.0	20	40.0	4	8.0	3.340	0.961
		P	50	2	4.0					6	12.0	42	84.0	4.720	0.834
19.	Visit the classroom to share expertise	A	49	13	26.5	11	22.4	20	40.8	3	6.1	2	4.1	2.388	1.077
		P	50	1	2.0			12	24.0	11	22.0	25	50.0	4.240	0.981
20.	Visit class to observe a lesson	A	50	33	66.0	7	14.0	7	14.0	3	6.0			1.600	0.948
		P	50	7	14.0	3	6.0	18	36.0	15	30.0	7	14.0	3.240	1.205

No.	Task	N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-ALWAYS f	5-ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
21.	Act as an advocate for special interests	A	47	13	27.7	12	25.5	13	27.7	6	12.8	3	6.4	2.447	1.212
		P	48	1	2.1	5	10.4	12	25.0	17	35.4	13	27.1	3.750	1.042
22.	Participate in school advisory committees	A	48	22	45.8	16	33.3	8	16.7	2	4.2			1.792	0.872
		P	48	4	8.3	6	12.5	14	29.2	16	33.3	8	16.7	3.375	1.160
23.	Participate in school goal setting	A	48	32	66.7	10	20.8	6	12.5					1.458	0.713
		P	49	5	10.2	9	18.4	13	26.5	13	26.5	9	18.4	3.245	1.251
24.	Participate in home reading programs	A	48	6	12.5	12	25.0	12	25.0	12	25.0	6	12.5	3.000	1.238
		P	48							8	16.7	40	83.3	4.833	0.377
25.	Review school work brought home by child	A	49	3	6.1	15	30.6	18	36.7	7	14.3	6	12.2	2.959	1.098
		P	50							8	16.0	42	84.0	4.840	0.370

A - Actual P - Preferred

Table 11

Distribution Administrators' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Parent Involvement

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-ALWAYS f	5-ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
1.	Help children with homework	A	24	1	4.2	8	33.3	11	45.8	4	16.7			2.750	0 794
		P	24					5	20.8	11	45.8	8	33.3	4.125	0.741
2.	Help with activities as requested by teachers	A	24	1	4.2	7	29.2	9	37.5	7	29.2			2.917	0.881
		P	24					2	8.3	10	41.7	12	50.0	4.417	0.654
3.	Help prepare instructional materials.	A	24	6	25.0	12	50.0	3	12.5	2	8.3	1	4.2	2.167	1.049
		P	24	2	8.3	1	4.2	7	29.2	10	41.7	4	16.7	3.542	1.103
4.	Help students with story writing	A	24	6	2.5	10	41.7	7	29.2	1	4.2			2.125	0.850
		P	24			1	4.2	4	16.7	16	66.7	3	12.5	3.875	0.680
5.	Attend parent teacher conferences	A	24					5	20.8	15	62.5	4	16.7	3.958	0.624
		P	24							1	4.2	23	95.8	4.958	0.204
6.	Attend school advisory meetings.	A	23	7	30.4	10	43.5	4	17.4	1	4.3	1	4.3	2.087	1.041
		P	23					5	20.8	7	29.2	11	45.8	4.261	0.810
7.	Attend public activities	A	24					2	8.3	14	58.3	8	33.3	4.250	0.608
		P	24							8	33.3	16	66.7	4.667	0.482
8.	Assist with fund raising	A	24	1	4.2	12	50.0	3	12.5	5	20.8	3	12.5	2.875	1.191
		P	23					4	16.7	13	54.2	6	25.0	4.087	0.668
9.	Assist with field trips	A	24	2	8.3	3	12.5	7	29.2	8	33.3	4	16.7	3.375	1.173
		P	24					7	29.2	7	29.2	10	41.7	4.125	0.850
10.	Assist with developing	A	24	13	54.2	6	25.0	4	16.7			1	4.2	1.750	1.032
		P	24			1	4.2	4	16.7	11	45.8	8	33.3	4.083	0.830

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-ALWAYS f	5-ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
11.	Assist in the school library	A	24	9	37.5	9	37.5	5	20.8	1	4.2			1.917	0.881
		P	24	1	4.2	4	16.7	3	12.5	9	37.5	7	29.2	3.708	1.197
12.	Assist students with computer activities	A	24	9	37.5	9	37.5	5	20.8	1	4.2			1.917	0.881
		P	24	1	4.2	1	4.2	5	20.8	12	50.0	5	20.8	3.792	0.977
13.	Assist with clerical tasks	A	24	12	50.0	11	45.8	1	4.2					1.542	0.588
		P	24	7	29.2	3	12.5	9	37.5	4	16.7	1	4.2	2.542	1.215
14.	Assist student to practise skill(s) in the classroom	A	24	4	16.7	10	41.7	7	29.2	3	12.5			2.375	0.924
		P	24			2	8.3	10	41.7	8	33.3	4	16.7	3.583	0.881
15.	Supervise small group activities in classroom	A	24	7	29.2	9	37.5	7	29.2	1	4.2			2.083	0.881
		P	24			2	8.3	9	37.5	9	37.5	4	16.7	3.625	0.875
16.	Supervise playground, lunchroom and buses	A	24	14	58.3	6	25.0	3	12.5			1	4.2	1.667	1.007
		P	24	4	16.7			5	20.8	7	29.2	8	33.3	3.625	1.408
17.	Do extra activities suggested by teacher	A	24	4	16.7	11	45.8	7	29.2	2	8.3			2.292	0.859
		P	24			2	8.3	6	25.0	8	33.3	8	33.3	3.917	0.974
18.	Respond to newsletters and notices	A	24	1	4.2	4	16.7	10	41.7	8	33.3	1	4.2	3.167	0.917
		P	23							3	13.0	20	87.0	4.870	0.344
19.	Visit the classroom to share area of expertise	A	24	3	12.5	11	45.8	8	33.3	2	8.3			2.375	0.824
		P	24					6	25.0	12	50.0	6	25.0	4.000	0.722
20.	Visit their child's class to observe a lesson	A	24	12	50.0	10	41.7	1	4.2	1	4.2			1.625	0.770
		P	24	1	4.2	6	25.0	8	33.3	7	29.2	2	8.3	3.125	1.035
21.	Act as an advocate for special interest	A	24	3	12.5	11	45.8	8	33.3	2	8.3			2.375	0.824
		P	24			5	20.8	5	20.8	9	37.5	5	20.8	3.583	1.060

No.	Task		N	1-NEVER f	1-NEVER %	2 f	2 %	3 f	3 %	4 f	4 %	5-ALWAYS f	5-ALWAYS %	Mean	S.D.
22.	Participate in school advisory committees	A	23	7	30.4	11	47.8	3	13.0	2	8.7			2.000	0.905
		P	23			1	4.3	7	30.4	9	39.1	6	26.1	3.870	0.869
23.	Participate in school goal setting	A	23	15	65.2	5	21.7	1	4.3			2	8.7	1.652	1.191
		P	23					10	43.5	7	30.4	6	26.1	3.826	0.834
24.	Participate in home reading program	A	24	1	4.2	4	16.7	14	58.3	5	20.8			2.958	0.751
		P	24					1	4.2	15	62.5	8	33.3	4.292	0.550
25.	Review school work brought home by child	A	24	3	12.5	3	12.5	18	75.0					2.625	0.711
		P	24					5	20.8	7	29.2	12	50.0	4.292	0.806

A - Actual P - Preferred

Appendix E

Table of Differences

Table 12

Differences between rating of actual and preferred parent involvement

	Administrators			Teachers			Parents		
	Diff*	S.D.	Rank	Diff*	S.D.	Rank	Diff*	S.D.	Rank
10. Assist with developing parent programs	2.33	1.09	1	1.91	1.28	5	1.47	1.19	9
6. Attend school advisory meetings such as parent councils	2.17	1.15	2.5	2.00	1.25	3	1.04	1.21	13
23. Participate in achool goal setting	2.17	1.15	2.5	1.75	1.47	9	1.91	1.44	1.5
16. Supervise children on playground, in the lunchroom or waiting for busses	1.96	1.33	4	2.21	1.56	1	1.15	1.13	11.5
12. Assist students with computer activities	1.88	0.99	5	1.96	1.29	4	1.91	1.39	1.5
22. Participate in school advisory committees regarding curriculum, safety, and/or descipline policies	1.87	0.92	6	1.58	1.23	12	1.65	1.61	3
11. Assist in the school library	1.79	1.31	7	1.45	1.30	14	1.51	1.11	6
4. Help students with story writing	1.75	0.79	8	1.65	1.22	10	0.90	1.14	15
18. Respond to newsletters and notices sent by school	1.74	0.92	9	1.38	0.88	17	0.48	0.78	21

(continued)

Table 12 continued

	Administrators			Teachers			Parents		
	Diff*	S.D.	Rank	Diff*	S.D.	Rank	Diff*	S.D.	Rank
25. Review school work brought home by children	1.67	1.05	10	1.88	1.07	6	0.40	0.80	23
17. Do extra activities suggested by the teacher	1.63	1.06	11.5	2.11	0.91	2	0.92	0.97	14
20. Visit the classroom to share an area of expertise	1.63	1.13	11.5	1.84	1.34	7	1.50	1.24	7
15. Supervise games, learning centres and small group activities in the classroom	1.54	0.93	13	1.32	1.13	19	1.19	1.18	10
2. Help children with activities as requested by the teacher	1.50	0.72	14.5	1.58	1.03	13	0.63	0.91	19
19. Visit a classroom to observe a lesson	1.50	1.10	14.5	1.64	1.37	11	1.58	1.30	4
1. Help students with homework	1.38	0.86	16.5	1.34	1.02	18	0.43	0.73	22
3. Help prepare instructional materials	1.38	1.01	16.5	1.39	1.11	16	0.76	1.34	18
24. Participate in home reading programs	1.33	0.82	18	1.83	1.19	8	0.86	1.12	16
14. Assist student(s) to practice a skill in the classroom	1.21	1.06	19.5	1.40	1.18	15	1.52	1.17	5

(continued)

Table 12 continued

	Administrators			Teachers			Parents		
	Diff*	S.D.	Rank	Diff*	S.D.	Rank	Diff*	S.D.	Rank
21. Act as an advocate for special interests	1.21	1.28	19.5	1.28	1.25	21	1.48	1.07	8
8. Assist with fundraising	1.17	1.19	21	1.30	1.27	20	0.54	1.00	20
5. Attend parent-teacher conferences	1.00	0.59	22.5	0.82	0.80	22	0.37	0.80	24
13. Assist with clerical tasks	1.00	1.14	22.5	0.76	1.15	23	1.15	1.25	11.5
9. Assist with field trips	0.75	0.94	24	0.70	1.11	24	0.84	1.19	17
7. Attend public activities	0.42	0.65	25	0.54	0.76	25	0.21	0.64	25

The scale used was : 1 = never and 5 = always.
*Differences are calculated by subtracting the actual from the preferred value.